

Our Legacy

by Infini0n

Category: Halo, Mass Effect

Genre: Romance, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: Master Chief/John-117, Shepard (M)

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2012-01-01 08:25:40

Updated: 2014-12-19 03:41:32

Packaged: 2016-04-27 02:42:17

Rating: M

Chapters: 11

Words: 73,914

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: the newest age of super-soldiers is given a new assignment, and it looks to be a cakewalk, until a traitor kills his inductor and escapes with no evidence to prove otherwise. Whats a spartan to do? Hunt the Traitor Down, that's what! ME with my own personal twist of Halo Awesomeness. M for death, blood and gore, lots of bullets, Language, and mature situations and themes.

1. Part 1: Chapter 1 :A Spartan?

****I DO NOT OWN MASS EFFECT OR HALO OR ANY OTHER VIDEO GAME TITLE!**
just the plot of this story is mine, along with a few of the chars
that i have made up.
>

****Hello my peeps! Infini0n here to give yah a little intro to the
Story "Our Legacy" so let's get the hard stuff out of the way first
so you can figure out right away if this is for you or
not.****

****1-This is a Halo/ME fanfick (along with some other inspirations
that i could not list because i was only given two
options)****

****2-This is Rated !M! for a reason. mostly because of very violent
action ****and the blood and gore**** that will follow and mild
through very suggestive themes. also for possible later themes (i
have not made my mind up one way or the other, so don't bug me about
it... too much. B-)
>**

****3-This story is following the Mass Effect Story-line but WILL NOT
BE CANON. though it will follow the story, it will not be the same, i
have changed a good bit of it to (hopefully) make it flow easier and
more smoothly together.****

****Now for timing and basics of the story itself.**

>

****1-timing is set in the late 27th century.****

**** 2-Halo events occurred in the early to mid 24th century****

****3-right now, i envision this to run from ME1 all the way to and beyond ME3. note that i have a good bit of the plot already down, so the Real ME will most likely be very different from my stories version.**
>

****4-Chapter will most likely NEVER reach more than 2,000-3,000 words. i hope they never reach any higher because i am sure it will give me a headache.**
>

****5-please, be generous with your comments, whether they be flames of hate or laurels of adoration****

****6-but please, this is my first public showing of anything i've written other than school essays. though, i really don't think that those count.****

****7-last but not least. if you like it. read it. if not. don't complain. i accept constructive criticism, not whining.****

****hope you enjoy****

*** * ***

><p>Part One : ****A Spartan?****

****Chapter One : In The Hazard Room****

******Date: January 10, 2681******

****Time: 0421 Hrs ****

****Location: Alliance Council Chamber, Arcturus Station****

Tension filled the air like living membrane as thick as brick. Captain David Anderson resisted the urge to reach out and grasp it. After stifling a shudder, he looked around at the other occupants of the room. Sitting around the circular table sat the most powerful men and women of the Alliance races.

What in hell is keeping the President? This thought, even though trivial, had come from the seasoned mind of one Captain David Anderson. He and the other joint chiefs of the Alliance had arrived mostly at the same time about 20 minutes ago.

21 minutes now. David thought as he looked at this watch.

This was very strange, given the man that the call originated from.

So, seated around the circular table of the council's meeting room 5 of the 6 most powerful people in Alliance space sat waiting. It was intimidating to say the least.

There was a Sangheili Counselor, Kiga Ronome. To 'Ronome's right sat the short yet stocky form of the Chancellor of the Unggoy Republics, Ganda Dinwal. Then there was the Elegant Nikka Gikrka the Empress of the Kig-Yar Imperium. to her right sat the massive orange form of the Lekgolo representative know as Reck and lastly, to David's left, The Prime Matriarch of the Yanm'ee Horde, Zeem'Nee.

All the individuals in the room sat in their short-backed chairs with a simple raised holographic console built into the table in front of their seats.

The room, in spite of the company within, was actually very similar to most that Anderson had been in. it was simple. There were 8 chairs in the room, two of which were empty, sitting around a ten foot wide octagonal table that had no center. Instead, on the floor where the table's center would be was a holographic projector that currently displayed the Alliance Seal in bright sapphire blue that floated in a beam of bluish light that went from the floor to the ceiling 3 and a half meters above.

The room, known to the few who knew it existed was called the "Hazard Room" and rightly so. Since it's construction after the Covenant/Human War, over 300 years ago, the Hazard Room has been the place from which the greatest of the Alliance's decisions have been made. It has been used only 27 times since it was built. This meeting would mark the 28th. That is why everyone was so nervous. Whatever was about to occur in this room was probably going to change the Alliance forever and it was certain to be no small change.

Other than that there were no outstanding features about it. Nothing adorned the walls save the glass orbs emitting the rooms light. The door itself had no seam and disappeared completely when shut. Although Anderson made a point to take the seat directly opposite of the door he had to keep reminding himself that it was, in fact, still there.

Another minute passed with little to no change then the door slid open with a near soundless hiss and in walked two figures. The first was a lean white male with a full head of grey hair wearing a naval officer's suit. On the shoulders, chest, and hat which he wore under his left arm he bore the seal of a fleet Admiral. Anderson knew that face anywhere. The strong jaw line, and steel grey eyes belonged to none other than the legendary Admiral Hackett the commander and chief of the entire Alliance Fifth Fleet.

Directly behind Hackett walked in the man who sent the message to gather these people together. He was the President of the Human controlled regions of Alliance space. President Daren Allan Greensburg.

The president, though just ass imposing in person, with his still brown hair, green eyes, and powerful body build, was much shorter than Anderson envisioned. He probably stood no taller than 5'7". The thought almost made him smile. _He seemed taller on the Holo._

When the Admiral and president found their seats all eyes turned to

the president. He seemed to ignore them as he pressed a few buttons on his console till the door slid shut sealing them all within. He cleared his throat and looked from leader to leader till he met eyes with Anderson then spoke.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said with a grim expression. "Welcome to the Hazard room." Nothing but stares were returned. He went on without pause, "Today we have a difficult decision ahead of us. As you all know, we, the alliance, have been in a state of Cold war with the Citadel Council since the end of the relay 314 incident 24 years ago. What you also know is that since a decade ago the last three presidents, Myself included have been in constant negotiation with the Citadel Council to attempt to establish a peace with them that will be far more 'Permanent' than our current standing treaty. Seven days ago I was granted an audience with the Council, and we reached an understanding and they gave me an option that previously has been unavailable to us." He looked directly at Anderson then said, "Their going to allow us another chance to join the Spectres."

There was silence for several moments as he let this sink in. the first to reply was Counselor 'Ronome.

"Am I to assume then that this is why you asked for the compilation of the list?" The Sangheili spoke in clear English.

"Yes, all of you were asked to bring a list of possible choices of your races most promising individuals from which we will choose a single person to become the Alliance's face to the Citadel races."

Empress Nikka spoke next in a voice that was surprisingly soft and musical. "Then what is He doing here?" she asked gesturing to Anderson. "All of us" she gestured again to the others around the table, "Are the leaders of our peoples, people of consequence. But he is a mere Captain."

Greensburg Smiled. "Ah, yes. Allow me to introduce you all to Captain David Anderson. Captain Anderson was our last Spectre Initiate."

At that her already large birdlike eyes got even wider in surprise. Everyone in the room seemed to take that bit of information sourly, except Reck. Who just seemed to rumble a bit.

"Thanks to his knowledge and experience with the Spectres he will help us to judge whom we select as our Spectre candidate."

The surprised silence extended another few seconds till Ganda Dinwal spoke up in the shrill high voice of his species. "Well, lets get started then shall we?"

And with that he opened his list file on the holographic projector in the center of the room and Continued.

"Malki Dwoon," he began then continued on with the first of the lists.

* * *

><p>3 and a half hours later the group was tired and annoyed with their progress. Or lack of progress as it were. Every list contained

at least a dozen names and each of them were outstanding soldiers, leaders, or problem solvers. But none of them seemed to have the mix that Captain Anderson wanted to see or at least enough of those traits to allow considering.<p>

He was surprised with how easily his rejection of the chosen individuals was taken. Sure, he got a few trying looks every now and then, but on the whole, it seemed that the joint chiefs of the Alliance had made him the official Decider of who the Spectre would be.

Name after name and soldier after soldier were knocked of the list till they stopped coming. Anderson looked up from his Consol when no one gave him another name.

"That can't be it." He said, almost desperately. The joint Chiefs only looked around the room at each other.

Nikka seemed insulted. Her feathers on her arms, neck, and face rose and she seemed to almost growl. "what do you Mean _that can't be it._ These are the best of the best in all our respective civilizations and all you have to say is _THAT CAN'T BE IT!_"

"Calm down Nikka" Reck Rumbled more than a little bit tersely.

"How can I be calm," She growled. "This _Captain_ has refuted and denied every individual that we have named off to him." She hit a button on her consol and the entire list came up in the hologram. All of the 109 names that were chosen and listed came up on the holo.

"Any of these Men or Women could work for our selection." She continued shrilly, then paused and took a quick breathe. "all of these individuals, are the best of the best."

"And that, Empress Nikka, is just the thing that you don't understand."

"Excuse me?" she turned to Anderson stood then slammed her small fists into the table. "Pray tell then, Captain, How do I not understand?" she sneered angrily which changed her usually such beautiful voice into a near cringing Caw which was much more familiar to the Kig-Yar form.

Anderson looked at her, than calmly typed something onto his consol when he finished, his name popped up in the list about two-thirds down the line between the names Michal Sheol and Dreek Sii.

David Anderson looked back up at Nikka and calmly replied, "Empress, I Am One of these people."

She seemed perplexed so he went on. "What the medals I've earned and the awards I've won say is that I Am The Best. My records declares it, and my men would swear it." He paused for a moment and shook his head. "But when my chance came to be a Spectre, I still lost."

Understanding seemed to Dawn in her eyes as her feathers dropped to their normal position and her growling stopped. "Oh," was all she said.

"yah, we need more than just the best. We need Gods damned perfect. Or at least pretty close to it. I've done the amazing and lived to tell about it. But what we need is someone that does the impossible with nothing. We need a person that '_WILL_' make the hard choices and never look back. We need someone that survives the suicide missions. We need a person that, when death comes to claim them and everything that they have, they will stand up, stare death in the face, insult him, laugh about it, then get away with it." He stopped his little impromptu speech to look at the joint chiefs.

"Then what we need, Captain," Admiral Hackett interrupted, "Is John Shepard."

Anderson raised a brow in confusion. "That name is not on the list Admiral."

"And for good reason, but first," he turned to the President. "Sir, it's a branch of the Spartan Program."

Understanding showed in Greensburg's eyes. "Go ahead Hackett."

The Admiral nodded then continued. "You all know of the Spartan program and our goals. To create and maintain an army of super soldiers to serve as a policing agency for the outer colonies and as a wild card for especially hazardous conflicts"

Nods came from all around.

"recently we found a way to not only replicate the Spartan II genetic manipulations, but also to potentially _Double_ the intended affects. We named this division, the Spartan IX Program and the result of all our hard work was John Shepard."

He tapped a few keys on his console then he pulled a small black thumb sized rectangle from his breast pocket. He set it on the table and pressed a button on its top and it began blinking red. A Hologram of a young woman blinked into existence over top of the item. Her body was made of transparent orange light. She smiled lightly at the Admiral then said aloud, "Hackett, how may I assist you today?"

"Wanda, Please open ONI file, Code Name Spartan, Serial SS9-001"

"Sure, code please."

"Saturn's Cyan Ring."

She smiled again. "Thank you Admiral. Opening ONI-file/Spartan/SS9-001"

She said goodbye then her form vanished and the small rectangle went dark. Hackett picked it up and deposited it back into his breast pocket. Then pressed another few keys on his console and a new file came up in the Hologram. It showed a large Caucasian human male that looked to be in his upper twenties dressed in common military fatigues, a short sleeve shirt, pants, and combat boots. But his size wasn't the muscle, though that was quite impressive, even Anderson had to admit, but the man stood easily seven feet tall, maybe taller.

His hair, closely trimmed, was black as midnight, and his eyes, though a bright deep blue showed the sharpness and experience of a man twice his age. On his face were two scars that seemed to harden his looks into what would be called, stern, but not unfriendly. One scar was a small mark on his right eyebrow. The other was a long white scar that rode from just above the left edge of his mouth to just under his left ear at the corner of his strong jawbone. there were other scars on the mans arms and neck, but most were rather small when compared with the one on his cheek. To the images sides were numbers and measurements that Anderson wasn't familiar with.

"Joint Chiefs and Captain Anderson, let me introduce you to ONI's poster boy for the last decade. John Shepard, and the Galaxies only Spartan 9."

2. Part 1: Chapter 2: We've Got Trouble

yes, i know that it has been longer than a week since my first post but i do have an excuse for it ! :)

but i hate excuses. **so instead of giving you the excuses i instead give you the good news. **

CHAPTER 2 IS UP!

**i know that its a little short, but i hope to remedy that in chapter 3 which i hope to post in the next couple days. **

Thanks Soooo Much To All My Readers And Especially **To All Those Who Have Set This Story On Alert And Favoring My Story **(**Though i think it may be a little to early to tell whether its worth it or not but i appreciate the vote of confidence never the less.). Also Thank you to TheLastHuman and WarHawk'42 for your comments. your words of encouragement are ever appreciated.**

**Also for the sake of your knowledge of my Version of the ME universe i have decided to start adding Galactic Codex entries for your amusement. So if you have a question about something I write in the chapter write it in a comment or send me a pm and I will do my level best to explain it. **

Hope you enjoy

I DON'T OWN M E OR HALO!

* * *

><p>"Our Legacy"

**Part: 1: A Spartan?
>

Chapter 2: "We've Got Trouble".

Date: January 10, 2681

****Time: 0723 Hrs****

****Location: Neylon 5 system asteroid field, outer colonies, sector 37

John Shepard sat in his small stealth craft in total silence on a large asteroid. The small craft he sat in was barely able to be considered such. It was all of ten feet long, the front 7 of that made up the diamond shaped cockpit that had little enough room for a regular sized man, let alone the massive Spartan that now inhabited it. The remaining 3 feet of the small craft was made up of a stealth field generator and a miniature Mass Effect Drive that allowed it to move without leaving any trace of heat. That alone made these small crafts known as "Panthers" due to their black appearance and their legendary ability of being completely undetectable to modern scanning methods. Perfect for missions just like this one.

There he sat waiting for the Covenant cruiser that they knew, by scan, was going to be flying through this very area within the next few minutes. He raised his head and looked around the area for the other 11 Panthers that awaited the coming cruiser. None of them were visible.

Perfect, he thought. _Let's hope it stays that way._

Several hours ago, stealth satellites that floated throughout the system had intercepted some very interesting transmissions that, after being translated, were discovered to be commands to a fleet of Covenant ships hiding out within the Neylon Prime Systems massive asteroid belt. The fleet was readying for assault on the system and would begin in nine hours, and even if the defense forces of the system had sent for aid it would take at the very least 3 days for the Alliance to send any form of assistance. By that time, the planet would be glassed and anyone not with the Covenant would be dead.

that was the plus and minus of living on an outer rim colony. You have all the freedom to do, literally anything you want to, but when trouble comes, no one's around to help.

Thus the Sangheili Captain Bulg'R, the commanding officer of the defending forces of the system had come up with a plan to attempt to save the young colony. Get together the most combat experienced individuals of his small command, have them fly out into the asteroid belt in the flight path of a covenant cruiser, hitch a ride to the fleet then blow up the largest ships in it. That was three hours ago.

John started. A light gleamed in the distance. He smirked, "There you are." His excitement only got higher as the sleek purple of the small Covenant cruiser glided into view. A few moments later he activated his Panther's ME drive and started toward the much larger cruiser. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw 11 black blotches that marked the rest of the infiltration teams.

By 'small' he meant it was rather small for a covenant ship. Most of their vessels were still larger than their Alliance counterparts. But that didn't mean that they were anymore advanced, at least, not for the past couple centuries.

Inside of 27 seconds all 12 Panthers had managed to find a place to hide on the ship. John found a little nook near the aft of the ship

and activated his magnetic locks. Three of the 12 man team, two humans and a Sangheili followed. There were three Spartans on the infiltration team, each of which would command a team of three Marines. The three teams would board three separate ships and hopefully cause a big enough chain reaction to destroy a large enough portion of the fleet that the small fleet of a few dozen defending ships would be able to deal with what was left.

But they first had to get aboard. And that would be the easy part.

The Cruiser floated through the asteroid belt with amazing fluidity. Dodging and swinging around the larger rocks with little to no effort as the ships kinetic barriers kept the smaller ones at bay.

_So far so good. _That was an understatement. He expected to lose a few men in the belt, but none had been lost.

In another minute the cruiser entered a clearing in the belt, according to what John could see, it had to be at least a hundred kilometers wide, maybe more. Then the fleet came into view.

"Wowâ€|" he said aloud. Spread throughout the clear area was a fleet of covenant warships of, at least, 120 ships. Most of the ships seemed to be of average sized destroyers, between 250-350 meters long. But around the center of the fleet were 19 of the new, 2 kilometer-long, Carriers and one Covenant Assault Carrier. The massive 10.3 kilometer flagship dwarfed every other vessel in the fleet.

How long have they been planning this? The question went unanswered. But it was unnecessary; he already knew that, in order to have this kind of base of operation, the Covenant had to have been planning this for a while. That, plus the fact they decided that it was worth the risk of one of their super-sized assault carrier ships. This was not good news. This meant that this must be the start of something big.

But why start on a backwater world like Neylon 5? That was an answer that he was very likely to never learn, so he put it out of his mind.

John decided that the Assault Carrier would be the ship he would board. If he could make that ship go critical, that explosion is almost certain to destroy most of the fleet. Not to mention the blow to the Covenants Pride if they succeeded.

The other two Spartans were near enough to make visual contact with John. With a quick wave they got his attention. The smaller of the two other Spartans, the Female, made a quick gesture with her hands. _"Which one?"_ She asked silently.

"_Big one_,_" _he replied

With a quick jerk of their heads they acknowledged then lifted their left fists and started counting down silently with their fingers in unison. _3..2..1.._ on Zero they activated the timer by which they would set their ships detonations. 45 minutes from now all their improvised bombs would go up in a brilliant flash that would hopefully engulf most of the fleet. _Hopefully_

The female quickly sent him another message. _"Good Luck."_

John nodded solemnly then replied, "_You too."_

In another minute, their host ship flew into the fray and the team disengaged their locks and shot off toward their destinations. The other teams flying off to their own targets and John and his team heading off to the largest ship in the fleet.

It took them nearly seven minutes to span the gap between the ship they rode in on and the Colossus of the Assault Carrier. The giant ship stood out against the blackness in the familiar purple that the Covenant still favored when constructing their ships. It was easily the largest ship that John had ever seen. By his estimation, the Alliance could probably fit 5 of their Super destroyers inside of it, if not more. It was kind of hard to tell when a ship was that big. But he knew it wasn't the biggest ever built. That title belonged to the now extinct Covenant Super Carriers. And those were wiped out since the Third Covenant Incursion; no one had bothered to use so many resources on a single ship sense.

The whole time he and his team flew he reviewed every scrap of knowledge he had on the massive vessels that, during the Covenant/Human War, was one of the most common vessels among the Covenant fleet. The training he'd been through had already taught him this, but to actually see one of these things up close and personal really drove the point home. For a moment he imagined what it must have been like for the Human fleets to look out their windows over 3 centuries ago to see a fleet of ships just like that one preparing to fire their plasma torpedoes on their much weaker human prey.

_How many human lives has this ship stolen? _The thought made him suppressed a shiver.

Don't worry about that now John, he told himself. _That problem will soon be rectified if I have anything to say about it._

As they drew nearer to the vessel John decided that the best method to accomplish the task would be to enter through a docking hanger and work their way to the command deck. Once there he would be able to initiate the ships self destruct. And with the power that this ship packed, the resulting BANG would prove to be lethal for most of the surrounding fleet. He grimaced and hoped it would be enough.

The three marines followed silently behind him as he neared one of the small hangar bays of the massive ship. When they had come to within a few dozen meters of the translucent purple shield that held the vacuum of space at bay he stopped his vehicle and activated the magnetic locks.

Without a word he activated his suits active camouflage system and as one he and the other 3 invisible soldiers evacuated their vehicles and made their way to the shimmering shield with the help of their magnetic boots. After a quick glance to make sure the way was clear John stepped through the portal and swiftly and silently made his way into the shadows on the far right side of the room. The other three operative followed suit. Their invisible bodies were outlined in a bright green glow thanks to a new form of radiation imaging developed less than a year ago by ONI. And although they could not see him,

they could see where he was on their motion detectors on their HUDs.

He smirked lightly; it was amazing what kind of tech ONI had to play with these days.

After a moments inspection of the area he quickly fell in line behind a three Grunt patrol that was heading in the direction of the highlighted route on the map in his HUD. Quickly and silently he and his team worked their way through the complex of corridors and rooms that made up the interior of the Assault Carrier. Their progress was painfully slow as they inched their way forward toward the command control of the ship. But with every step John's excitement grew. They just might make it through this after all. All he needed to do was make it to the Fleet Master's controls and he would have complete power over the ship. From there he would set the ships self destruct.

Several times, John had to shift visible spectrums to allow his team to see him in order to give hand signals, but other than that, nothing of consequence occurred on their way to the bridge.

After what felt like an eternity, but was only 13 minutes of travel they arrived at the doors to the Bridge. Once at the door he shifted his Camouflage into his team's visible spectrum and gave the Universal Halt signal, a closed fist raised.

He quickly took a scan of movement in the room beyond the doors, what it revealed was two souls at the door, one in the center surrounded by another 7, and another 20 souls scattered around the room the room in a symmetric order.

_So, one Fleet Master, the two at the door and the other seven sircling him are probably guards, Brutes or Elites most likely, then a flight control crew of 20. All that against 3 marines and myself.

—

In smooth mechanical movements he relayed the information to his team with orders for them to seal the door and take out any not immediately life threatening targets, and leave the others to him. Their lights on his motion detector blinked in affirmative as they awaited his go order.

He took a split second to marshal his thoughts and grab the two heavy pistols resting on both his thighs and set the round set of his weapons to high powered incinerator rounds. This firing mode only gave him 40 rounds per clip but that should be more than enough for this. _This should be easy,_ he thought , then activated the door controls and stepped in.

* * *

><p>here is the codex entry for the spartan program, hope that this answers some questions.<p>

****Galactic Codex: SPARTAN Program****

The SPARTAN Program, less commonly known as the ORION Project, was part of an effort to produce elite soldiers through mechanical and biological augmentation. The SPARTAN-II program was the first in the

series to meld advanced exoskeleton technology with Human soldiers with superior physical attributes.

Though the Program was originally intended to quell rebellions The Human-Covenant war marked a change in Programs directives; Due to the Spartans pivotal role during the War a new objective was added to the Orion projects goals; to create a group of elite soldiers meant to subdue insurrections in their infancy, without substantial military casualties, to minimize civilian casualties and avert civil war, to substantially reduce the cost of conventional means of pacification, And finally to act as a final safeguard against extinction in case of another inter species war.

Since the Orion Projects creation over 300 years ago, the Spartans have grown to become their own branch of the United Systems Alliance Military including it's own small fleet and army. as long as the Spartans exist they will be a safeguard for Humanity and the Alliance.

3. Part 1: Chapter 3: Boom!

****I Know, I Know! ****sorry it took so long to get this chapter out****. i said i should have it up in a week and it took over two. But, In my defense, it is twice as long as i originally thought it would be. so i hope i took long enough going over it with my fine-toothed comb. hope you all like it :)****

* * *

><p>"Our Legacy"

****Part One: A Spartan?****

****Chapter 3****

John's eyes memorized the entire scene in less than a second.

The Bridge of the Carrier was much like what every other ship in the Covenant fleet. There was a single chair on a raised platform where the CO of the ship gave commands to his underlings. Surrounding him was a flat expanse of about 12 meters, further circling this were three rows of holographic consoles that circled the outside of the room in a neat U-shape. In front of the chair at the top of the dais stood a Sangheili Fleet Master dressed in the expected red and blue heavy armor. Standing around him was a squad of 7 Jiralhanae, (known as Brutes to those that cannot pronounce their species name.). Two more Brutes stood on either side of the large door. They were armed and dressed for war. The other 20 people in the room were the Kig-Yar and Sangheili that sat at the consoles controlling the ship.

All of this information his mind devoured in a second, the very next second is when he made his move. In a motion too fast for Human eyes to follow John raised his pistols and fired 3 consecutive shots from both pistols at the Fleet Master. The shots were so close together that you only heard one. In the next movement he threw his arms to either side and fired 2 shots each into the heads of the Brutes at the door, their brains exploded out of the far sides of their heads as the rounds penetrated their thick skulls.

By the time the brutes in the room realized that someone had fired at them the Fleet Master was dead and the, literally, brainless bodies of the two guards at the door crumbled to the floor with a loud thump. Before the brutes in the center of the room had time to activate their shields John made two more kills. One kill shot through an eye, the other was three shots through the center of a young brutes face. By that time the remaining brutes in the room had activated their shields and were turning to the engage the large human.

In less than a second, the Military Order that existed on the bridge collapsed into the complete chaos of a war zone. John kept firing at the Brutes as he charged pulling the triggers so fast it looked like machine-gun fire. The moment he stepped through the door he dropped his Camouflage to draw any return fire away from the three blurs coming in behind him.

It was definitely working. Every single individual in the room with a weapon, which was most of them, reached for their weapons. The aliens in the room without weapons jumped from their chairs and ran as they Screamed "It's A Demon!", "Run for Your Lives!", and "We Can't Kill IT!"

_No matter how many times I hear it, that just never gets old. _ John thought with a light smile.

After eight shots on a Brute he made a very important realization.
The Covenant have upgraded their shields.

As he ran at the Brutes he fired another dozen shots off out of each weapon to test the abilities of their shields. After the twelfth shot each of the shields he was firing at flickered, but no burst.

That could be a problem.

With a flick of his arms he locked the two partially empty pistols on his thighs then closed both fists. The moment his fists closed he mentally activated both of the very rare weapons he had on either arm. From the armor on his left forearm sprang a 16 inch, razor sharp, silvery colored, inward curving blade. And forming around his right was a little toy that he had come to appreciate a great deal in the past several months, the Concussion Pulsar.

I hope these will still work.

The weapon looked like a science fiction toy, complete with a glowing circle of light that circled his right fist. He aimed it at a group of three Brutes that had finally managed to come to their senses and started shooting at him then pulled the trigger. From the circle of light around his fist a brilliant shock-wave of concussive force flew out just slow enough to be seen and grew till it slammed into all three Brutes. They went flying into the crowd of Frantic techies who were screaming and shoving to run away as grenades started going off in the back of the room Spraying the walls and consoles in blood and gore. Several of the flight crew were crushed as the Brutes landing.

In the next moment, the room erupted in fire as rounds of shrapnel from the three, still less than visible, humans behind him and the energy and plasma from over 20 different covenant weapons started

firing, seemingly, all at once.

John knew that the techies would be enough trouble for the trained Marines. Those Brutes needed to be taken out before they figured out where his help was coming from. Brutes may be a little dense sometimes, but they were far from stupid.

John watched his shield gauge carefully as he charged the only two Brutes Currently standing. They lifted their guns and did likewise shooting all the while.

His shield hit 0 faster than he hoped they would, but he was ready for it none the less, the very moment it sparked out of existence he activated his third and final lifeline. In that instant and his body was bathed in a light green shimmer and a green 10 second countdown started on his HUD where, under normal circumstances, his blue shield bar would have been.

After that moment every round that met his body armor literally bounced off the green shimmer and John kept running. The moment he and the nearest Brute were 5 feet from each other, he turned his hips and spun under the Brute and, holding one thick handful of fur, he punched the full 16 inches of his arm mounted razor, which completely ignored the fact that the brute had plasma shields, into the brutes chest, twisted, then hurled the Brute up and over his body to land in a dead heap behind him.

John used the force of the throw to hurl his feet into the Gut of the second charging Brute sending them both flying backward toward his brothers that were just now regaining their feet. John followed through the air and landed straddling the beast's chest already bringing his blade down. In one clean swing he separated the brutes head from his body.

John smirked under his Helmet. _Yep, still works._

For a moment, John took stock of the situation by Motion Tracker. All three of his people were still alive and, given the sounds of automatic weapons fire, shooting, that meant that they must have managed to seal the door. The Covenant side of this battle though was quite another story. Of the 30 covenant soldiers that started in the room, only 13 were left. 3 of which were the Brutes that had just made it to their feet at the front of the room.

He checked his timer. _6 seconds left._

Two of them rushed him dual wielding the far too famous Mauler, the other angled toward the right wall where what appeared to be a weapons locker rested. But he didn't have time to think about him at the moment.

Kill these two first, then I can deal with the other one.

He deftly jumped to his feet and met the Brutes head on.

They both came at him with their guns raised high to use the famous, sword-like, blades on the Maulers undersides to hack at the, only slightly smaller, Human. Seemed to John that they planned to use the now useless guns as bludgeoning weapons.

But John had other plans. With the fluid grace of an Asari dancer, John Dropped below their wild swings and swept their legs out from under them with a powerful and lightning-fast spin. They both left the ground and surprisingly let go of their Maulers. John snatched two of the weapons out of midair and before the two Brutes had fallen half way to the floor he jammed a barrel under each of their chins and pulled the triggers. The pulsar did it's job in overloading their shields otherwise they would have stopped the shots.

Both the Brute's eyes went dark as their brains were turned to soufflÃ© by the shrapnel. _8 down and one to go_. And not a moment to soon.

On his motion tracker he saw two red dots jump one of his men who seemed to be busy firing in the other direction.

Before they managed to grab the Marine, John swung to his left in a complete 180 and hurled a biotic push at the two Kig-Yar that had thought to surprise his men from the side. They hit the wall with a sickening splat. Whatever was left of them fell to the ground as a spike of pain drove its way through John's brain.

I hate biotics.

Then one of his teams vitals went blank.

Shit. John understood that in this mission, he would need some form of backup, and while humans were not exactly Spartans, they were all he had. And he needed every one of them.

He spun again to his right and slammed the floor with his fist and a blue shock-wave shot toward the remaining 7 of the covenant flight crew. Of which he hit three. The pain in his head intensified.

John had been keeping tabs on the last Brute with his motion tracker. According to that, the Brute had found whatever it was he wanted in the Locker and was only a few meters to his right. Then, once more, took stock of his timer. _.3 secondsâ€¦|_

He started turning to confront the last charging Brute But a quick glance out of the corner of his right eye was all he managed before he Felt more than heard the resounding '_WUPHOOM_' of a gravity hammer strike.

Before John was properly able to gain a grasp on the situation he was hurled against the left wall of the Bridge his breath was driven out of him. His right side, the side the Brute hit, was screaming.

That's odd. He he opened his eyes he saw why he hurt so much. His Matrix had died right at the moment the brutes hammer impacted him, effectively dulling the full force of the blow. Otherwise he'd be dead. he had seen what the results of a gravity hammer strike looked like firsthand, even with full shielding, and it wasn't pretty

Though that may not be too far off by the look of things. John was the only true Result of the Spartan IX Project. What that did was make him the fastest, strongest, and toughest human in the Galaxy. But even with his super enhanced abilities, he still depended on Air

to operate his muscles and organs just like every other human. Though the actual impact of the hammer was dulled by the Matrix, the shock-wave it generated was more than enough to throw him across the room and knock the air out of his lungs. The suit he wore, though incredibly advanced and heavily armored, was not built to withstand the full force of a gravity hammer, so all of his suits systems were offline, that included life support. This effectively left him trapped in a near vacuum.

And the Brute Knew it. John could tell by the ugly smirk on his face and by the way the Brute took his time to reach him to deliver the smash that would end his life.

Then he saw an Elite, over on the far side of the room, he must have been hiding behind some of the consoles. He must have managed to evade the firestorm that had killed everyone else in the room apart from the humans that had just managed to finish off the last four of the command crew and were now turning to help the Spartan.

The sneaky bastard was sneaking up on his crew.

That was all it took to get john moving again, air in his lungs or no.

Quick as a thought, and his body running purely on adrenalin and willpower, john was up and with hand and mind summoned a biotic pull that Hurlled the elite through the air and right in between the massive Brutes shoulder, sending them both tumbling to the ground. John leapt up and yanked the flying hammer out of the air then he drew back, up, then over his head and brought it down into the tangled mass of the two aliens with a resounding "WHAM!" he swung again. Just to make certain the Brute was dead.

And the fight was over. All 21 seconds of it.

John's body heaved as he searched for air. Frantically he reached up and thumbed the release for his helmet. It snapped open and he gulped down the cool life giving O2 that flew in.

He pulled his helmet off and practically fell to the floor as he fought to steady his breathing. For almost a minute he sat there till his body stopped quivering from the overabundance of adrenaline and the extreme oxygen deprivation. As soon as it did he sat up and barked a laugh. He was happy to be alive but was not eager for the drop of adrenalin that was keeping his pain at bay. That hit was going to leave a mark for a while.

As he surveyed the room John was surprised to find that all three marines were alive. Daniel, the man whose vitals had flat lined, looked perfectly fine apart from the armor on the front of his chest that was melted.

All of them, even the Sangheili, Grall, looked spooked.

He looked right back and smiled. "Is it just me, or did their shields seemed a little tougher than usual?"

They didn't reply at first, but after a few moments, the young woman by the name of Callia, said "I've worked with a lot of people and I've never seen anyone, let alone a Spartan, survive a strike from a

Gravity Hammer before even with full shielding." Her tone was suspicious.

John, looked at her face plate and could almost see her eyes behind it, they started to ask a question.

John smiled lightly and shook his head. "Don't think too much of it I just got lucky. Trust me, the green shield isn't exactly standard issue."

She didn't seem very happy with the answer but she dropped the issue and went to check on Daniel.

_Time to set the bomb. _John thought then stood, feeling a not to small amount of pain in his right side as he got up.

Brute must have broken a few ribs with that hit. He thought.
unbreakable my ass. I wanna refund.

It is commonly believed among the general populous, and even most Spartans, that all Spartans have unbreakable bones. But alas, they are not. the Carbon reinforcement and cybernetic enhancements give Spartan bones and incredible level of yields strength and blunt resistance. But even those incredible limits are as null when on the receiving end of a gravity hammer._
>

Ignoring the pain, he walked over to the command console at the Fleet Masters Chair in less than a minute he had deactivated the ships communications array and set the self destruct. before he left the console he took a quick peek at the recent messages that were still on the screen. one message, in particular, caught his interest. it read; _"Get it ready, i will inform you when it is time."_

Well, that's cryptic.

he checked the time it was sent and found it was sent several seconds before they entered the room.

Interesting. i wonder what it means?. then he shook his head. _it won't matter in twenty minutes. _

He lifted his helmet and closed it up and clamped it into place as the power came back on. It had been off since the power overload caused by the matrix's shutdown.

Just in time to leave. He thought grimly._ I'll just chalk that up to my damned luck._

His eyes turned to Daniel who was leaning against one of the consoles catching his breath. They still tried to keep a little distance between them. They had every right to be cautious. He just did what no other human in the galaxy should have been capable of doing. He killed nine brutes while sustaining enough enemy fire to boil a tank and survived a direct hit from a gravity hammer. They were right to be worried, that should be completely impossible. But he's used to doing the impossible.

Shepard looked at the melted plates on Daniels chest. "Are you ok?"

Daniel looked up when he spoke. "Just a little shook up, Sir. I'll be fine"

"Can you still activate your stealth field with you armor like that?"

He could hear the smile in the man's voice as he raised a wrist and answered. "Generators on my wrist, it should be fine. Every electronic in my chest plate is out though."

"Good, suit up, time to go. We'll make our way for the nearest hanger and keep going till we find one with a ship. Daniel here can't breathe outside anymore."

Without a word the marines sealed their suits and activated their stealth field generators and started walking toward the door.

He stood and quickly made the distance that separated himself and the marines. Stealthily, they worked their way back to the nearest hanger.

After five minute of walking through the halls they heard the chime of an opening door down the hall and out stepped a Sangheili Field Marshal trailed by a group of Four Honor guards. The guards were dressed as though they were ready for an assault. A Type-29 Direct Energy Rifle and a Type-31 Direct energy Pistol. The weapons were very similarly modeled after the more common type-27 versions that most covenant soldiers used but there were some major differences, like rate of fire, power per shot, and the new red color they always were. Of course, they wore their usual red and gold armor. As they walked past the alliance soldiers John also noticed each of the guards wore an energy sword at the small of their backs.

The Marshal was not much different. But they seemed to be walking with a purpose that was not lost on the Spartan.

_If i were a betting man, I'd say that this is who that message was sent to. _

Following an instant gut feeling, John followed them. His gut may not have been the most reliable source, but, as his dad always used to tell him. "_John, whenever in doubt of which way is the right one, follow your gut instinct, it picks up things that your senses won't show you._"

_How true that was. _

The three marines behind him followed.

John checked his countdown timer. He only had another 13 minutes before the ship went boom.

That gave them, at most, another 7 minutes to find a ride and liberate it.

Looks like their heading in the same general direction, if it takes to long we can just drop into any dock we pass and take a drop ship.

They tailed the Marshal and his posse for a good six minutes to a hanger bay on the same side of the ship their Panthers were parked on. When they entered the hanger they were faced with a very unusual ship, one that John had never seen or heard of before. This was greatly disturbing to the Spartan because he was intimately familiar with everything that the alliance knew about the Covenant, that went from tactics, weapons tech, their ships designs, armor modification, their languages, everything they had on the Covenant. But this ship was new. And if there was one thing that the Covenant was, it was stubbornly predictable. They may have changed a little with the times but for the most part, the Covenant is exactly what it had been over 3 centuries ago.

Obviously, that's not entirely true anymore.

The ship they were walking toward was jet black and was shaped like a flat chicken egg about seventeen meters long, ten meters wide, and 5 meters tall. The _Egg_, which is what John decided he would call it, stood on five small legs that held it up off the floor. The metal that the ship was made of was dull and seemed like it didn't reflect light, at all.

He quickly scanned the room. And found that he couldn't "See" it in the scan. It was completely undetectable to his suit.

_That's not good. _John did not like this ship. Sure, the sensors in his suit weren't the best that the Alliance had, but they were very good. If he couldn't detect it, then most of the ships in the alliances navy wouldn't be able to either. With this ship the Covenant would be able to fly through most of the patrols that flew throughout Alliance space and remain unseen until they came near a core world, they accidentally entered a system with an awaiting fleet, or ran near a prowler or a Dreadnaught.

If a Field Marshal is about to leave in this thing, it's probably not good for us. I'll take it. At the very least, it should tell us a little bit of the Covenant's technological progress over the past century.

He quickly looked around the room and found it must have been an "authorized personnel only" room since there were no other crew in it apart from the five Elites.

He made a few quick hand signals to his team and they spread out to flank their targets that seemed to be prepping the ship.

In moments they were ready but before they could do anything two of the Sangheili walked over to storage door on a wall, opened the door and carried something out of it. When he saw it, John wasn't sure what the thing was. It was a thin oval about 4 feet long that glowed red. The two Sangheili carried it like an old treasure chest with handles that sat off either side of it.

Shepard figured it was important, otherwise the Marshal wouldn't have left the _Egg_ to oversee it's movement. He figured this would be as good a time to act as any.

John stalked up to one of the elites and jammed his blade fist deep under the Elites left arm, driving his blade through both of it's hearts. It still ignored their shields. Before the second one

realized that his partner behind him was dead John ran up behind him and took his head clean off his shoulders. his body and head hit the floor a moment later. The three Marines took the other two from behind at the same time; they died from a spray of bullets into their backs.

The Marshal who had been at the door to the vessel till now roared when he saw his men killed from behind and hit his own stealth field generator as he yanked his energy sword from his back.

John was already following the invisible Elite with his pistols as he heard the familiar _Hiss_ of an energy sword activating. With the combined fire of the soldiers the Marshal dropped to the floor before he got a hit in, purple blood running from every orifice.

"Grab that thing." John told the three marines as he ran to the ship pointing at the strange oval. After stepping inside john swept his eyes over the area. The Room he had entered looked like nothing other than a simple airlock so he moved on to the only visible way out of the room, a door in the back. He didn't wait for the marines to follow as he ran to the back of the small entry room he turned left in the hall outside and ran for the cockpit. He passed several rooms on the way quickly clearing each of them as he did so he didn't have to worry about someone coming up to ambush him from behind.

Once in the cockpit he found the pilot seat and started up the ship. He was pleased and relieved to find the ship had been designed much like the many Seraph Fighters he had piloted in his military career. Inside of 30 seconds, about the time it took for the soldiers make their way to the cockpit, he had the ship backing out of the dock.

"This ship isâ€¦ differentâ€¦" the Sangheili, Grall said as he took a seat at the comm. Station.

"Amen to that, I had no idea that the Covenant built ships like this." Callia said as she took the Scanners.

"it looks like a stealth craft." that was Daniel

"Let's hope so, if we're going to live through this we need to be fast and quiet."

The new ship that John ordained the _Egg_ covered the distance between the Assault carrier and the edge of the asteroid field in about 6 minutes and to their knowledge, they were completely unseen, otherwise someone would have hailed them. Once at the clearings edge he stopped the ship and waited.

The room was tense as they waited for the ships to blow. John kept checking his timer. It read 20 seconds.

10 secondsâ€¦

5â€¦

4â€¦

3â€¦

2â€|

1â€|

In a sudden bright flash of light the Assault carrier and two of the smaller carriers disappeared to be replaced with a giant fiery ball of super heated plasma and energy that was as bright as a sun that lasted for several long seconds. John could almost feel the blasts heat as it reached out into the rest of the Covenant fleet and completely filled the void in front of the _Egg_ with it's blinding white light.

After a long moment the light faded and the four soldiers on the ship could see what their silent mission had done.

The fleet was brutalized. From what Shepard could see about two dozen ships survived the blast. Though those ships probably suffered major electronic failures due to the overload of the cores of the three that were jerry-rigged into bombs.

The rest of the ships were torn to shreds from having been too close to the carriers or from having a ship that was closer to the center hurled into it by the explosion.

Daniel jumped from his chair. "Hell Yah!" he whooped.

"Doesn't look like they will be much of a threat anymore." Callia happily deduced.

John allowed himself a grin. "No it doesn't."

Grall just shook his head and smiled and started working on his console. "I'll see if I can get a message out to the others. If they survived then they will hear us."

It took several attempts, but the other teams called in and gave their locations for pick up. Once he knew where to fly John turned the thrusters up to high burn and blasted his way to pick up the other survivors.

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: The Covenant

****The Covenant Empire****, also referred to the ****Covenant ****is a religious hegemony made up of several alien species that, up until the conclusion of the Schism, controlled a large portion of the Orion Arm in the Milky Way galaxy. Though it is realized that the Covenant are still a major threat the exact capacity it continues to operate in remains unknown.

Since their first meeting in 2325 The Covenant waged a genocidal campaign against Humanity until the destruction of the San 'Shyuum home world at the end of the "Second Covenant Incursion" of 2480. Since then the Covenant have retreated from explored space and little has been learned of how the San 'Shyuum or the Covenant have managed to survive or retain such a large naval force. of what little is known of them, it is certain that the Covenant will not stop until they are either destroyed or humanity if exterminated.

The Covenant are extremely hostile and are, under no circumstances, to be sought out or communicated with. any sighting of Covenant ships or personnel should be immediately directed to the nearest Alliance representative

4. Part 1: Chapter 4: Inductee

I LIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE! yes, you read that right, I am alive. im sorry it took so long to post. i can't sugar coat it this time though. this time it was mostly because i was just lazy. but i still got it out B).

Thanks to all of you who subscribed and those who comment. i really appreciate the comments B).

**I do not own ME or Halo. if you like it, leave me a comment conveying what you liked. if you don't like it, leave me a comment. Converse guys. thats the only way we'll get anything done. Hope you guys enjoy :)>

* * *

><p> "Our Legacy"

Part One: A Spartan?

Chapter 4: Inductee

Date: January 10, 2681

Time: 0755 hrs.

**Location: Arcturus System, Arcturus Station, Sector 1, Alliance Council Chamber, (AKA: Hazard Room) **

"Spartan IX?", Nicka Questioned when the admiral had stated it. "There are no Spartan IX's." at least she thought there weren't, but that was before Hackett shot her a look that seemed to say, Really? How much would you be willing to bet on that?

As the tension in the circular room skyrocketed all the leaders in the room Bristled and eyes narrowed with the desire to say something about not being told that Oni had continued development on the Spartan Program without them being informed. Well, everyone save Reck, the massive lekgolo seemed the epitome of tranquility.

This bit of information seemed to bring the Humans Alliance in obstruction of the 14th of the 23 mandates that make up the Alliance Compact. Even though no one but the most elite of politicians could give you a word for word definition nearly every Alliance citizen could define it as if any governing body joins the Alliance they must share information on any secret organization they currently have or ever will create with the Alliance Council Circle.

Anderson silenced himself and sat quietly as the tension simmered. From the moment the admiral declared the existence of a Spartan IX he realized that this had very quickly become a battlefield that he had no business being on. He was a soldier, not a politician. Give him a

gun and he could run circles around most other people but talk them to death with brain shattering analogies and explanations that are so long and so pointless that the original point is lost to everyone? No. So he just sat there waiting for the bigwigs to finish their catfight.

After a few moments of the silent simmering Nikka looked about to burst with questions but 'Ronome cut her off. "Before we start shouting and throwing around threats and accusations lets listen to the explanation." He leaned forward with his four digit hands and long forearms on the table. His quadruple hinged mandibles moving into the Sangheili equivalent of a frown watching the two humans across the table. "well, Deran, we're all ears."

The dagger stares didn't faze either human in the slightest. Hackett cleared his throat and started. "Let me begin by saying that there is not" He put a large emphasis on the 'not' "a Spartan IX program. If there were the HA would have informed you. No mandates have been broken here. It was just an experiment." He paused for a moment as he leaned back into his chair with a thoughtful look on his face. "It was an experiment that I thought was a failure, until now."

At the mention of this being an experiment, the tension that had filled the room only moments before dissipated leaving only curious stares and knowing looks.

"What was the objective of the experiment? Were you trying to make another super soldier or wasâ€|"

Greensburg cut 'Ronome off with the explanation. "No, we were not attempting to make a new super soldier, we were testing Humans ability to accept multiple changes on the genetic level. Up until a decade ago we could only put so many changes into every SpartanIf we tried to put any more changes than the human body could take the body would shut down. That's why we have half a dozen different types of Spartan. But about twenty years ago we started documentation on an uncharted world that had a unique single-celled-organism that, after infecting it's host it manipulates the host's genetic structure."

A fearful look took over Gikrka's face as she asked, "Like the Flood?"

"Nothing like the flood," Hackett refuted, "This Organism only alters what's there. It enhances the natural abilities of the host. It adds nothing. After studying the organism we were certain that we could use the new information to significantly alter a humans genetic code."

"How many attempts were made?" Zeem'Nee asked in the deep, humming, echoing voice of the Yamn'ee.

"There were two experiments with 24 volunteers in each."

"And John was the only survivor." Ganda stated matter-of-factly in his high pitched voice.

"No actually, there were a dozen survivors. But John was the only one that didn't come out a vegetable and we don't know why. This is also the reason why ONI doesn't know what to do with him."

"Then why class it a failure?"

"Because no new data was found and all 48 subjects are either dead or a vegetable, With the exception of John, and we can't figure out how to replicate it."

"What do you mean you can't replicate it?" Dinwal inquired.

"I mean exactly that. We tested it at the genetic manipulations on the cellular level and it worked fine. But once we put the changes into a human something goes wrong and the subject either dies or goes brain dead. We even tried clones. But even that didn't work. Our scientists have theorized that there is something in John's mind that makes the difference. We just don't have the technology necessary to figure out what that is yet. The only reason I bring him up for contemplation is because the Alliance navy doesn't need him. We have an entire army of Super Soldiers to do what he does. Yes, he is a super soldier of a whole new caliber, but he just doesn't fit in anywhere."

"Then why bring his name up here? Why not choose an Arbiter, or even a Mgalekgolo" Gikrka threw in.

Everyone turned their eyes to Reck's massive form when he rumbled in reply "I have offered the names of the Lekgolo I believed would be best suited for this assignment, the Mgalekgolo have too many minds to be proper for this assignment. I can think of no others to add to this list. Besides, we have always been a race of peaceful disposition. Few of our kind know the ways of war any longer." He rumbled with light laughter then continued, "And the Arbiters have always had more than enough on their hands to deal with. If this John Sheppard is really a 'Third Wheel' as humans say, then I can think of no reason that he should not be the Alliance's first Spectre."

Greensburg smiled lightly and looked at 'Ronome "Well Kiga, what do you think? Have any Arbiters that don't fit in?"

'Ronome shook his head and replied, "No, Reck is correct. The Arbiters have more than they can handle now with the recurring Covenant threat."

After a few more answers from Hackett and Greensburg everyone in the room fell silent and turned to Anderson who had been silently reading the information on his console waiting for the leaders to finish. With all eyes on him he looked up.

"What do you think Captain?" the president asked.

He straightened in his seat as he realized that by some unspoken agreement he was back in charge. After a slow visual take in of the room's occupants Anderson turned his eyes back to the hologram in the center of the room and studied the image for a few moments. Then he took a breath and said, "What's his story?"

Hackett and Greensburg shared a look then the admiral typed in another few commands and a dossier opened up on each of the consoles the name at the top read

Name - Shepard, John Alden

DOB - 4-11-2645

Place of birth - Unknown

At the first 'Unknown' Anderson was curious. At the third, his mind was screaming for answers, but Hackett anticipated such. He raised his hand to stop any questions. "I'll read this through, try to follow along. And if you get any questions just hold them to the end. Most likely your answers will be in here." He pointed to his copy of the dossier. "but keep in mind that a great deal of this is classified information and is not to be shared with anyone outside of this room with a security clearance level below 13-C" basically that meant anyone that wasn't at least Admiral, very high ranking politician, or a highly ranked scientist.

After everyone nodded their assent he began the briefing.

* * *

><p>Over the following hour, Admiral Hackett had been giving a very interesting briefing on the image on the holographic display in the center of the room.<p>

John Shepard, The One And Only Spartan IX. The man on the holo looked human enough, but after hearing the unedited version of his File it seemed that a title of "Human" did not accurately describe the man. Even before his transformation into the galaxies first and so far Only Spartan 9.

But what was probably the most interesting thing about him is that John had no records before the age of seven. He was found by James and Alex Shepard when they had to land their ship on the nearest planet for emergency repairs due to a recent pirate attack. After they found him they searched for his family, but all they found was the wreckage of a 60 year old ship that looked like it had been stranded for several decades. After several weeks of examination and immunizations James and Alex adopted him.

He adapted amazingly quickly for a child under his circumstances and even though he had been given no formal schooling he displayed an incredible intelligence and an unbelievable capacity for learning. By the time he turned nine he knew James' and Alex's ship like the back of his hand and he could replace, patch, or repair nearly anything on the ship as well as he could fly it which was actually very good. He never did well in math though which brought James and Alex no end of amusement.

Since he was a natural born biotic Alex taught him everything she knew from training in BAat and it quickly became apparent to them that, for a human, John was a very powerful biotic. He just absorbed anything that anyone would teach him from reading and writing, to swimming, shooting, hand-to-hand, playing musical instruments, and even singing, and virtually anything to do with computers. His father was an excellent technician and would play a game with his new son where they would take turns creating and hiding a virus then locating and destroying it which brought endless complaints and threats from the crew. They had to stop that one when one of John's misplaced viruses joined with one of James' then nearly caused the ship to self destruct. Alex grounded them both for a month after that one.

All in all, they were a very happy family. And with the addition of Alisha, James' and Alex's new born daughter it only got better.

Then came the First Contact War in 2657.

The Argos, James' and Alex's freighter was making a delivery of goods to one of the larger settlements on Shanxi when the Turians assaulted the Colony. The Argos was shot down when they tried to escape. Most of the crew survived the crash but most of them were killed by a Turian assault team that boarded the wreckage. John killed five of the Turian commandos that had boarded the ship; the first two were in defense of his three year old sister, Alisha. The second two were the ones that had killed James and the last was the one that shot his mom, Alex. John and Tina were held hostage with the two other survivors of the Argos until the siege was broken nine days later

After that John and Alisha were taken in by Alex's younger sister, Joan, and her family who lived on an outer colony named Mindoir. Little Alisha took the change rather well, considering that she never actually got to know her parents, John never fully got over it. Then almost five years later during the pirate assault of Mindoir. His entire new family and all his friends were either killed or taken, even his seven year old sister, Alisha. John managed to survive, but not only did he survive. While surviving for three days without food or fresh water awaiting rescue he managed to kill over two dozen pirates that were unfortunate enough to find him in the ruins most of whom were Batarians.

Three months after Mindoir after he turned seventeen John Shepard registered and started military training. After basic training he started the more advanced stuff but his first live training mission had gone terribly wrong. A thresher Maw had gotten into the training Center on Akuze. He had saved 5 of the 50 N7 cadets on the assignment by risking his life drawing the beast away from a drop-ship to allow them to get aboard and escape the planet. When an assault team arrived the following morning to hunt the thing down and find the remains (if any) they were surprised to find the young cadet covered in dirt, filth and gore cradling his sniper rifle had managed to kill the monster with explosives and heavy weapons fire from around the camp.

John Shepard's entire life was full with many dozens of similar scenarios and even better examples of how versatile and dangerous this man really was. Before he turned twenty-seven he had been an infiltrator, a sniper, an ODST, an N7, and a fighter pilot. And that was only up until he became a Spartan nine years ago. Since then, his record nearly tripled in its incredulity. Even though he was only 27 at the time it was hard to believe that he had never made the rank of captain. In fact he had only earned the rank of commander 5 years into the Fourth Covenant Incursion when a small squadron of ships were dispatched to investigate sightings of Covenant ships. The squadron was not equipped to take on a fully equipped Covenant fleet of over 600 ships. When the Alliance ships took flight to warn earth John stayed with a small crew in the hope that they could slow down the Covenant fleet. John and his team managed to cause enough havoc in the fleet to slow it down enough for the Alliance to prepare for the assault. millions, possibly billions of human lives were saved because of John's decision.

And then there was the Zion incident. Anderson shivered while he read over it. He had to fight off the images his mind had created to go along with the story. He had been through a lot in his time in the military but never had he heard of anything like what was explained in this file. Any person that could survive what John did there ****deserves**** the chance at being a Spectre.

Anderson looked down from the Projector to his own console where the information was also displayed. He reached out and selected physical statistics and read the information that it displayed. The data included a great many stats, many of them, he did not understand. He ignored those.

Anderson almost laughed. John Shepard stood just less than 7 feet at 6 foot 11 inches in height. He thought for sure the man stood over seven the holo is deceptive. He weighed four-hundred and twelve pounds and, thanks to the extensive genetic and cybernetic modifications, he could lift four times that. What those modifications also did was give him super human speed, reflexes, cognitive function, and a wickedly high metabolism which made him heal a dozen times faster than the average human. Throw in his advanced control of biotics, his natural ruthless efficiency, his calm calculating mind, and his technological aptitude. The man was a Human Tank.

After hearing the story of the man's life Anderson was practically ecstatic. This John Shepard, had to be the one man that literally could not fail in becoming a Spectre. But he kept his excitement hidden; there were some answers that he needed before he could make a proper judgment.

"So," Anderson eyes were pulled away from his console at the sound of Hackett's voice. "Any questions Anderson?"

He turned to Hackett, "I have three."

Hackett raised an eyebrow inquiringly. "Yes, Captain?"

"You said that he doesn't fit in anywhere, but with his resume he could probably get any assignment and placing he wanted. How does this make it difficult for ONI to think of a way to use him?" this thought had been bouncing around in Anderson's brain since the admiral had said it. but only now, after hearing and reading John Shepard's story he just had to know.

Hackett replied "would you want to fight next to a man that was most likely going to get you killed? he survived more than his fair share of missions where his whole team died and was unfairly granted the nickname '_Death Wish_'. He managed to get on board with several very prestigious squads, but once they figured out who he was, they almost always found a way to get him off their roster. Next question?"

_ Well, if he makes it into the Spectres he'll be working alone. So we won't have to worry about that getting in his way. _Anderson thought then asked, "what reason did he give when asked why he wanted to join the Military? Why did he take up your offer to possibly join the Spartans?"

Hackett smiled and answered "he quoted a movie from the early

twentieth century. He said that 'I don't like bullies, no matter where their from.' Then added that he never wants anyone to go through what he's been through and that he'll do anything and everything he can to prevent it from happening again."

"So he's not a xenophobe?"

Greensburg barked a laugh. "Are you joking? Most of his best friends and lovers have been aliens."

Anderson thought on this for a moment. _That falls in line with what I've been reading. So he has morals and virtues. He's not a loose cannon. That at least takes out some of the Liability. He will do his best or die trying and is at least professional around non-Humans. I'm liking the guy more and more the more I learn about him._ He smiled lightly at the thought. But he cleared his thoughts and sobered before he continued. "Alright, last questions, then I'll make my recommendation."

There were nods from all around the room as the people around the table signaled they were ready.

Anderson took a deep breath then asked "is this man," he said pointing to the image on the holo, "the type of man that you would trust with the fate of the galaxy and all the people in it? would you trust him to make the decisions necessary to ensure the survival of not only humanity and the people of the alliance, but every other race of aliens that we know of now. Will he show the galaxy what the people in the Alliance are capable of?"

Everyone in the room stopped breathing for a few moments after Anderson asked his final question. In a single instant, they all realized what it was that they were going to ask the man they decided on to do. If Shepard was chosen, that would be exactly what would be expected of him. It would be his responsibility to make the choices that could change the galaxy.

Anderson almost expected scream from Gikrka, but she just sat there, quietly thinking.

"Is this the kind of person we want protecting the galaxy?" Anderson looked every leader in the room in the eye as he asked.

Dinwal was the first to answer. "He probably has some serious emotional scars."

"He's lost his family, not once, but three times." Hackett chimed in.

"He was crippledâ€¦| lived through that nightmare on Zion." 'Ronome added solemnly

"He was ostracized on numerous occasions merely because he managed to survive where others could not." Reck rumbled.

"He's lost his home twice." Zeem'Nee continued.

"He is already weighted down by thousands of decisions. Can we trust his mind not to buckle under the weight of thousands more?" That was Greensburg, but when he spoke his eyes showed the weight that the

last six years of his term have made on his mind.

Anderson turned his eyes to Nikka, the only person in the room that has yet to add any thoughts to the question presented. But she just sat there staring into the eyes of the man on the holo as if she could reach into them and draw out the answers she was searching for. After a few more moments of soul searching she blinked and her mind came back to the table and the question at hand.

"Yes" she began, her words were spoken softly but loud enough that Anderson did not have to strain his ears to hear it. "He lost his family. He lost his home. He survived Zion. And he was even ostracized because of his incredible ability to survive. And yes, he probably has a great many emotional scars." She met Andersons stare evenly. "but under all that weight, and under all that pain. He survived. And if there is one thing that I know, it is that whatever does not kill you makes you stronger." She glanced down at her console then looked at and pointed to the holo of John. "and he, my fellow members of the Circle, is exceptionally hard to kill. And from what I have read, his judgment is unquestionable. He would kill himself before he'd risk the safety of the galaxy. I vote in favor"

This took everyone in the room by surprise. They didn't exactly expect Nikka to support the Spartan. It was more likely that she would point out another thing that was wrong with him and why it made him unable to do the job. But after she spoke the other leaders in the room smirked as if they had just played a major joke that only they understood.

_ If I were a betting man I'd say they planned that._ Anderson thought drolly

"He is a Survivor and will not go down without a fight." Reck said thoughtfully, "I also vote in favor.

"He's a leader. He will lead by example" Dinwal added. "I favor as well."

'Ronome spoke up next, "He is a Warrior. He will not give up until the battle is either won or lost. I favor."

A Yamn'ee hum filled the room with Zeem'Nee's response. "He is a Hero. People will idolize him and want to be just like him. I believe he will make an excellent Spectre."

"He is certainly capable of making intelligent decisions and being able to support them with reason." His lips twitch in a smirk. "I can say that I favor."

All eyes once again turned to Anderson as Hackett smoothly inquired, "What about you Anderson," he motioned to the holo once more, "Is _This_ the sort of man you want protecting the galaxy?"

The answer sprang to that question had been on Andersons tongue since he spoke the first of his three queries. "Admiral," he considered each member of the circle with a glance, "Members of the Circle. I believe that this is the _Only_ kind of person who can protect the galaxy." A leery smile dusted the captains features as he fell silent considering the implications of what just happened. _The first

Alliance Spectreâ€¦| The first Human Spectre. Christ, this is sure to get interesting quick._

"I'll make the call." Hackett announced as he stood to leave. Without breathing another word he nodded to the Circle and left. The rest of the Circle gave short goodbyes and left. After a few short moments Anderson was alone. Sitting in a seamless room with no companion apart from the man on the holo.

Anderson remained silent; Speculating at what awaited John in the near future. He had been there once, A long time ago. And it was the least that he could say when he thought that he did not envy the man.

He sat there another ten minutes just contemplating then he stood and walked to the door. But before deserting the room he turned back to the holo and silently uttered, "Don't let us down John Shepard."

Then he left and the door hissed shut in it's airtight vacuum. The lights remained only for another ten seconds then, once again, for the twenty-eighth time in over three centuries the Hazard Room went black.

* * *

><p>I hope this clears up a little more of the fog enshrouding my universe.
**

Galactic Codex: Systems Alliance

The Systems Alliance, Created in 2420 is a coalition of races who have bound together to strengthen and reinforce each other, ensuring their continued existence. Though it only contains six races, there is no limit given to who may join. Each of the governments within the Alliance must rule itself with the same basic principles that govern the whole, the list of which is given in the form of the Alliance Compact.

The Alliance Compact was written and signed by the three Original races in the Systems Alliance; Humanity along with the Unggoy and the Lekgolo The only two races to completely pull away from and sever ties with the Covenant Created the Alliance Compact as an affirmation of their peace and has resulted in a very close friendship between the three races. it took another 40 years for the Sanghieli, Yamn'ee, and Kig-Yar to join however some of their factions remained loyal to the Covenant.

The Alliance was originally meant to provide allies against the growing covenant threat but has grown into a thriving society of a multiracial government that has lasted for over two centuries.

5. Part 1: Chapter 5: A New Mission

**? Hellooo AgAiN PEOPlES! **

Contrary to what most of you guys are probably thinking, I LIVE! Or, in lamens terms, I'm not dead.

Now before we go on to the chapter I feel I should let you know what happened. I beat ME3, nuff said. My first reaction was denial, then depression, then infuriating nothingness as I tried to continue writing. But no worries, I DO plan on continuing and FINISHING this story. As I said in the beginning, it will get done. It will just take me a while. But now that I am back to writing again and over my TBFS (The Bioware Failure Syndrome) I hope to get back to getting a couple chapters in a month. But no matter what any of you may be feeling about the ending, remember that the game is still epic awesome, and it deserves an Awesomeâ€¦ No, Awesome is not strong enoughâ€¦ An EPIC ENDING OF EPIC EPICNESS. I have already begun work on such an Epic, and though I may fail, I will attempt with every part of my being to give the loyal lovers of the ME universe an Ending that the trilogy Deserves. So Band With ME My Friends and help me to carve out this ending that we all want.

**Without any more wait, let us get on to the NRBEAC, also known as "Normal Ranting Before Every Chapter". **

Here are some answers, vague and otherwise, to some questions I've gotten through reviews.

1st question; Where Chiefy at? I'm not going to say one way or another who is going to be a character in this story. So whether he is in this story or not is for me to know and you to find out. Butâ€¦ when thinking about it apply these facts to your queries. In the universe I concocted for "Our Legacy" the knowledge of the Spartan II program was lost when Reach was destroyed in 2340 (I will not include Halo 4 right now, it will just make my head hurt) so the Alliance really has no knowledge of exactly what the Spartan II's were capable of. At the end of the Covenant/Human War in 2343, Master Chief, who was about 37 at the time, was labeled MIA. The current date is 2681. The Alliance has yet to create a way to allow humans to live more than three hundred years, 150, sure; 300, _No_, with extra '_No_' on the side.

**2nd question; is the Alliance still using slipspace travel; YES! Absolutely yes. According to what I've read in the wiki's, and what I like to imagine (this is my fanfick isn't it?) slipspace travel is many times faster than element zero jumping. For reference; in "Our Legacy", the average Alliance ship can travel from one end of the galaxy to the other inside of 5 months faster ships could make it in four or less. The average Citadel Council ship would take several decades. But do take into account that Ezoo FTL is much safer than slipspace FTL. Sometimes, but not too often, when a ship takes off into slipspace it just vanishes and is never seen again and the Alliance is still not entirely sure why this happens or, for that matter, where they go. They attribute this phenomenon to faulty maintenance. Ezoo has never caused a ship to just disappear.
**

3rd; about romance. I have not decided as of yet what will happen in that regard, for the most part I'm just winging this. But I do want a romance, I'm just not sure who it will be with. In regard to Ashley though, I find no reason why it can't be her in ME1, but in ME2 and beyond, I can honestly say that it is not very likely. If the woman I loved called me a traitor for working with the only organization that even bothered to notice and do something about the growing problem of the reapers, I'm not sure if said person could ever make it up to me. But we shall see in time.

****And as for Zion, (Devious smirking and evil laughs all around) that is for me to know, and you to find out. But you will know what it is before the end of this story. I'm planning on leaving bits and pieces of the experience throughout the story so you can hopefully piece together what happened, but if we don't get to it by the end, I'll write a piece up for it and post it on FF for your enjoyment.**

****Also, before I forget, I know what happened in the halo universe, I've read up and continue following the wiki, I've read the books, I've played the games, if I write it in here, assume I know how it really happened and take it that way, if I change it, it's because I either didn't like it, or I need it that way to make other things in the story to work. But don't let that discourage you from pointing things out, I am here to improve my writing skills and to have fun, so go on with your bad selves :D, and question away. Cause it may have been put there cause I was being stupid. ****

****Also, important info regarding this story on my profile page, check it out.****

****Alsoâ€¦| Thanks soooo much for the comments. We're at 11 now! YAY! Review "More" please.****

****I knowâ€¦| I'm ranting again, So Without further a due, on with the chapter. _Before I rant some more._****

****ME NO OWN ME SERIES, if I did I'd be rolling in much doe and would hire someone else to do thisâ€¦| _No I wouldn'tâ€¦|_****

*** * ***

><p>"Our Legacy"

****Part One: A Spartan?****

****Chapter 5: A New Mission. ****

****Date: January 18, 2681****

****Time: 0913 hrs.****

****Location: Ender colony, planet Neylon 5, outer colonies, sector 37, ****

****John knew that he had her this time, **Time seemed to slog by as if filtered through a thick jelly as he moved with lightning speed to snatch at the golden blond hair that flew by his peripheral vision. But his massive fist closed over empty air. He only smirked as he realized that he had missed her again. Until he saw her foot come out of nowhere to slam into his unguarded temple.**

Quick as a blink he ducked his head to the side as her foot sailed over. He lashed out in counter attack but she was already gone.

Damn she's fast.

That was the understatement of the hour. The "_SHE_" of whom John was

referring was one his closest friends, Nellie-5-3962. The fastest Spartan V since Amelia-5-1332. Nellie was so fast that she could literally dodge a bullet from low caliber Alliance weapons; he'd seen her do it.

The gym filled with the sound of Nellie's breathing as she came in again for another bout of strikes that felt like someone was trying to beat him to death with a foam baseball bat. John laughed out loud at the comparison. To him that is exactly how much damage she was causing. She had managed to bruise him lightly just about everywhere. Two days ago, before his broken ribs had fully healed, her punches had hurt a lot worse. But now that he was back to his good old granite-hard self most of her blows felt like little more than a hard poke.

Their match had been going on for what he was sure was at least seventeen minutes, he wasn't sure exactly how long since Nell wouldn't give him any spare moments to sneak a peek at the clock on the wall behind him. He knew that he could probably keep on going for hours more, but he also knew that Nell was reaching her peak. She would soon get tired and start to lose focus and concentration. That is when she would make a mistake that he could exploit. Till then he would bide his time.

Despite what most men would think if they were in his position, John actually found it elating to have an opponent that he didn't have to hold back in anything but physical strength in order to make the fight fair. Even though he trained with other Spartan frequently, it was difficult to find a match like Nellie, even among the Spartan IIX's and he found itâ€| refreshing.

If only she were strongerâ€|

But alas, only a Brute or a Krogan could match his raw physical power. John had realized this almost ten years ago only a short time after his transformation and there was nothing to do about it now. So he fought on.

For what he guessed was another four minutes Nellie continued to zip into, around, under and over his guard. He had managed to block more of her strikes but she still managed another 27 hits, most of which landed on his legs. she even managed to land a solid kick into his crotch bringing tears and a string of curses directed at her much smaller form running away from his massive bearlike one. But it soon fell back into that same rhythm. She would zip in, he would block and dodge, she would land several strikes, then when he retaliates she would dance, leap, or fly out of his reach before he managed a hit.

But he finally saw an opportunity coming. Nell's movements were getting slower. She was getting tired, but he was still running on a near full tank. And by the look on Nell's face, she knew it too. But that never meant she would give him the win. That was one thing that he absolutely loved about his young friend. No matter how the odds may stack against her she would always fight to win.

This is the longest fight they had in a while and he was certain that he had managed to wear her down enough for him to finish the fight.

It took several more minutes for his opportunity to show itself, but when it did, he took full advantage.

Nellie came again at full speed seeming intent on going for his legs again. But she had slowed down considerably since the beginning of the fight and John was ready. When she was near enough John lashed out with a lightning fast round house that, if it had hit, would have thrown Nell completely across the room and into the far wall. However, it did a good bit more than he had wanted it to. With the grace and poise that a panther would have killed to have she deftly grabbed a hold of his femur with both hands, and in a spring-like motion, flipped both legs into a kick directed straight into his jaw. John was rather impressed with the maneuver and had only enough time to realize that maybe she was not as tired as she had made herself look before he felt the incredible force of the small girls kick land squarely on the underside of his chin. And as he felt his right foot leave the floor he had to admit to himself that maybe the girl had a good bit more strength in her small form than he had given her credit for. If she had done that on anyone but him the full bodied kick would have snapped their neck or broken their jaw€ probably both.

The very next instant his massive body hit the metal floor with a dull but loud WHOOM!_ And the fight was over. Nellie won again. His back had hit the ground first. And apparently she had followed him through the air as he felt something light and soft land on his stomach, but it still knocked what little air was left in his lung out.

"HA! You fell for it! I knew you would!" Nellie's light and sing-song soprano cried in victory as she danced a sort of victory jig with her upper body. If John had the energy or the air to do so, he would have burst out laughing.

Although John was definitely the stronger of the two, by several times even. Nellie still managed to beat him handily about every other match. As it turns out, being that much faster than your opponent actually did make up for your lack in strength. _As long as your opponent didn't have any weapons._

Though he had just suffered such an incredible blow, his head remained entirely clear, one of the curses/blessings of what he was. He opened his eyes and just looked at her for a second, gathering energy and air, then he smirked at her deviously. She read the look on his face like it were a neon billboard standing over the highway at midnight. She tried to leap away with a slight squeak, but was far too close to him to escape the massive hand reaching out at lightning speed to grab her across her uncovered stomach, and in a movement faster than the human eye could follow their positions were reversed and John looked down on Nell with a predatory satisfaction.

"You _thought_ you had me." he declared smiling.

Before Nellie could gather her wits enough to respond someone interrupted with clapping.

"I will admit." A deep mechanical bass voice began. "That was a really good hit."

John and Nell both turned their heads to the only door to the gym

that they had previously been the only ones inhabiting. The strange voice belonged to one of the colonies defense Mechs, apparently being controlled by Troll, the Ai responsible for the settlements defense. The Mech was identical with the millions of others that the Alliance Military owned. It stood exactly six foot tall and was proportioned almost identically to a human with the exception of thicker more powerful limbs and no head.

It stood facing both Spartans. The black plate that extended from where the neck would have been to just below the pectorals stared at them a moment longer before stepping forward.

"What's wrong? Another Covenant fleet already?" Nellie asked more exasperated than anything else as both Spartans came to their feet.

"I thought for sure it would take them at least a month to forget the lesson we just taught them up there." John laughed as he pointed above them indicating the fleet they just decimated then caught a towel that Nell threw to him from the racks on the nearest wall and began toweling himself off.

"Nothing so exciting, Spartans. We've just finished repairs on the Communications relay and it seems that someone has been trying desperately to get in touch with you." The Mech pointed a long metallic digit at John.

"Me?"

The Mech bowed slightly in its form of a nod. It didn't really have a 'head' to nod.

"We're on vacation." Nellie retorted, which was true. They were on vacation up until they had that little run in with that Covenant fleet they had been having a great time of relaxing. If your definition of relaxing was running around a backwater planet doing relay races, shooting matches, and beating each other to a pulp in the name of recreation then that was exactly what they were doing. Vacationing.

Nellie was in a nearby system with a fellow Spartan, Kiever-4-20976. They had just finished dealing with investigating a sighting of Covenant forces just in the next system and had come to Neylon because of a distress signal requesting assistance with a pirate assault. That was the same pirate assault that knocked out their comm. Relays, John was already there hunting said pirates. Nell and Kiever arrived just in time to assist John in stopping a Covenant invasion. How lucky they are!

"Not anymore you're not. The Alliance brass sent a dozen top priority messages to you over the last seven days. The latest is to direct you to get to Jump Station Seven ASAP." They already have a ship, the Taurus, en route to pick you up. We've already made contact with the ship and have explained the situation. They expect to arrive within the next three hours.

John grunted and threw his towel over his shoulder. "Was there anything else in the messages?"

"Negative."

John frowned at that. Normally there would be a contact or two for him get information from, but he could probably get the intel from his outside sources. He usually does so whether they give him contacts or not.

"Well then," He stated as he started for the door. "better pack up." Nellie was right behind him. Once they had made it down the hall and could talk in relative secrecy she commented. "what do you think that's all about?" her long blonde hair billowed behind her in a wave.

"Don't know. But if they flagged it top priority then it must be important."

"Aw. How come I never get any of those?" Nell pouted,

"You did."

"When?"

John smiled, "When we got here."

To that she punched him in the arm. "That one doesn't count."

John only laughed as they walked.

* * *

><p>After John was packed and he'd said his farewells to Nell and Kiever he walked himself to the spaceport, or at least what served as one on this backwater world out on the fringes of Alliance space. The port was built right outside the large settlement and was composed of a couple small warehouses and a half dozen mid-sized landing pads for dropships hanging over a chasm whose bottom was over a mile deep. He busied himself with disassembling and reassembling his sidearm until it got boring, which lasted about fifteen minutes after he had assembled his pistol 37 times. After that he played with his combat knife till his ride showed up.<p>

It took the ship three hours and nineteen minutes to get a dropship to the pads, but he was there waiting for it. After they made contact with the command staff of the settlement, they boarded ship and headed off surface into space and onto the _Taurus_, a 100 meter long SR3 model that had been refitted as a stealth personnel transport. It was as high a class of ship as John had ever seen. And it had individual rooms, which on Alliance Ships, were a luxury. The captain of the _Taurus_ had no information, just instructions to deliver John to Jump Station 7 where he was to await further orders.

This information did nothing but make John nervous and a little angry. He was the Spartan 9, through no one but him and a handful of other individuals knew that. But that, other handful of individuals, were the ones that were responsible for every mission he had ever been sent on. They knew what he would be doing, they just wouldn't tell him.

So with his mind on edge and his thoughts in turmoil he decided to check out what had happened in the galaxy during the last week. He might be able to pick out a bit of information that would set off his

inner radar.

Most of the news was exactly what it always is; some scientist just made some new breakthrough with medical technology, another promotion of a war hero, recent activities of the covenant, an experimental ship was on its way to jump 7â€ the moment he heard it he searched it out. after he read a little about it he was intrigued. The newest model ship in the Alliance the SR7, named the _Normandy_ started it's test flight about three days ago, and so far, it's shown amazing speed. It set off from Talana Space Station in sector 23 and in three days it had passed clear into the middle of Sector 20. That is a five day flight by any Alliance standard. But the Normandy had managed to cut that time down by half and it was flying stop and go to constantly check their energy readings to ensure they were in optimal working parameters. At this rate, the _Normandy_ would make it to Jump Station 7 inside of two weeks. That put the last record of 27 days to shame. It would arrive at Jump 7 only a day after he would.

Interesting.

He was just going to move on, but he got a funny feeling that this was important so he dug a little bit, turns out, his gut was right, as usual. The _Normandy_ SR7 was captained by a man named David Anderson. John was sure he had heard the name before and in moments his implant retrieved the memory. He had met Anderson During the assault of the pirate base world of Torfan almost ten years ago. It had been John's test operation after he woke up from the experiment. He had fought with the captain and his platoon in the assault.

His job may not have been in intelligence, but he had experience in gathering intel while serving the first half of his military career as an Infiltrator. He decided he would call in a few favors and get all the information he could on Anderson and his current mission. The rest of the day he spent on Anderson and the Normandy. He discovered that he was a war hero with a ridiculously high success rate, he served in three wars including The First Contact War and the Fourth Covenant Incursion and over a hundred other classified operations, and he had more medals than any man really had any right to need.

The next bit he researched was Anderson's current assignment, which was a cover if he ever saw one, and he had seen a lot. It turns out that the decorated war hero, captain David Anderson was needed to test drive the Alliance's newest design of cruiser, the Normandy SR7. You do not send a hero to test drive a ship. It does not matter how nice the ship is, It's just not done. But try as he might, John could not manage to dig his way to the real reason why Anderson was there. Whatever the real reason was it must have been important otherwise Anderson wouldn't have been involved.

With his clearance John could get past almost any military red tape that stood in his way so when he keyed into the Alliance Military Database he had access to nearly any information that he wanted to know. Nearly. Turns out, this was one of those "Nearly" cases.

John grunted in derision as his attempts to access the information were blocked then moved on.

The Normandy, which he checked next, was very difficult to find solid

facts on. Some thought it was a stealth bomber, some a heavy destroyer, and yet others thought it could be a high tech recon ship. As it turned out, it was all three, and then some. The SR7 was the most advanced ship in the Alliance navy (that the Alliance would admit to) and while the exact design and tech was classified, the numbers provided to alliance news cast throughout the systems showed that it was definitely a top of the line vessel. It had a new design of slip space drive incorporating the discovery of Element Zero which gave it unparallel speed and maneuverability even among vessels half its size as well as weapons systems that made it capable of taking on ships several times its own size. It was a technological marvel of human engineering.

Or so he thought until he saw a picture of it. The Normandy SR7, simply put, did not "LOOK" like a Human ship. Heck, it didn't even look Alliance built.

The first thing he noticed wrong with the Normandy's design was its wings. Humans never built war ships with wings. They saw it as a significant waste of valuable resources and building materials yet this ship had two sets of wings on both sides that stretched at least three quarters of its length and were just as wide as the vessels body. The next thing John noticed was the Normandy's shape. Although the ships body looked to be almost identical in design to the UNSC destroyers of the 2300's it was also far too sleek to be a human vessel, but far too rough and rugged to be anything but.

John could only shake his head and snort. The Normandy looked like a billionaire's space yacht not a war ship. As a matter of fact, he would sooner believe that the Turian Hierarchy had built it than the Systems Alliance.

Wait. He stopped reading for a moment and just studied the pictures. The sleek, long, aerodynamic design looked very similar to the avian bird-of-prey look affixed to all of the Turians vessels. This sparked John curiosity; he quickly ran a search and pulled up a picture of a Turian destroyer. And just as he thought it would be, the resemblance was uncanny. The Normandy was smoother, sleeker, and its wings weren't quite as wide, but apart from those differences they looked remarkably similar.

"Hmmm", _interesting. Why would the Alliance build a ship after a Turians design? _He filed that little tid-bit into the back of his mind for later consideration and moved on to his next target.

For hours he stayed hunched over the PC in his room searching over anything that was attached to Anderson and the Normandy. There was precious little. John realized that he didn't have the necessary equipment to gather the intel he wanted. So, after he had scrounged up every little bit of useful information he could find on Anderson and the Normandy he gave up the search, turned away from the desk, stood and stretched. He would leave the rest of this battle to his informants. It was at that moment that his stomach rumbled.

_time for some food. _With that thought and images of Lasagna and coffee floating around his thoughts he stalked out of his room and down the hall to the mess., it was empty of everyone but the cook. He ordered a plate of lasagna lightly burnt, his comfort food, and took a seat to order his thoughts.

Although it had only just started and he still didn't really know much other than the fact that he would probably be shooting people, he had a bad feeling. The very same feeling that had saved his life more often than not and he did not like what it was telling him. But he couldn't do anything about that. He was a Spartan, and was his job to follow the orders given by his officers, and he was really good at his job. He would keep on his toes for the time being and would he would remain aware so as not to be caught unawares but apart from that, there was not a lot he could do. His gut told him that the Normandy was important and that it was no coincidence that he would be arriving only a day before it and it's crew did. Something interesting was going to happen, and John would need to be ready. Once his lasagna was ready he grabbed it then sat down by himself and ate in silence.

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: Technology, Slip-Space-Drive

The Slip-Space-Drive is an engine core capable of propelling a vessel at speeds that are much faster than standard FTL and is the primary form of FTL used by the Alliance. This method of FTL incorporates the opening of a wormhole into a parallel dimension humans call Slip-Space, simply because they understand it as a plane where everything is very close together. By moving into the other dimension, they can travel great distances in very short lengths of time. Though the slip space drive make faster FTL possible it is also the more dangerous form of FTL, with the technology required to operate it and the maintenance required to keep it operational it is much more likely that something will go amiss and cause spontaneous combustion or worse, Slip-Space-Misplacement, a phenomenon where a ship sets off into FTL but does not return to Normal Space and is never seen again.

* * *

><p>Wow... that was 3,700 words, that's a lotâ€|

We all deserve a round of applause for that one.

Till next time, Rock On!

6. Part 2: Chapter 6: Spartan On Deck

Hello again all!

**It's me again with another update. I know what you're thinking, "Already!" but it's so soon?" yah... don't be impressed, i had most of this written already by the time i posted chapter 5. hopefully i'll get the next chapter up pretty quick but don't think i'll be here tomorrow with another chapter up and ready to go.

>

**Since i went a few months without updating, i thought i should post it as sort of an apology. anyway, now that that's out of the Way, on with the Chapter!

>

****Thanks as always.**

>

****I do not own ME**

>

*** * ***

><p>"Our Legacy"

****Part Two: A Traitor In Our Midst.**

>

****Chapter 6: Spartan On Deck. ****

****Date: January 26, 2681****

****Time: 0622 hrs.****

****Location: Jump Station 7, Rokel System, Sector 34****

April 2, 2672

I've decided,

**_I don't know why I've waited so long to write it but I have
consigned to take up the major's offer, it was simply too good for me
to pass up. I'm surprised I actually had to think about it. It's been
about three weeks since then._**

**_The deal was simple. If I agree I will be reconstructed free of
charge. After two weeks of body reconstruction I'll be flown to a
secret facility where I will be submitted to a great number of
operations and manipulations. After the operations are completed the
information gathered will help all the people of the alliance,
possibly create new medical and or genetic augmentation technology.
It will most likely kill me. If it doesn't, I get a new job and a new
life. One that is free from my old life, old friends, old memories,
and that blasted survivors curse my dad told me stories about when I
was a kid. I still don't believe in curses, but after living through
what I've lived through, I'm starting to wonder, seriously wonder,
about the possibility. _**

**_I arrive at the facility tomorrow, they start operations the day
after that. Two weeks from then I'll either be dead, a vegetable, or
I'll wake up a super soldier of a whole new breed. Let's hope for the
later shall weâ€|_**

I'll write again when I wake up.

****John's **blue eyes traced over the entry once more noting the
elegant handwritten words in faded black ink on the page. It had been
almost ten years ago when he wrote that entry. He sighed deeply as he
thought of the things that had led up to that moment in his life.
That was a full month and a half after Zion. And he could not recall
a moment in his life that he had been as lost in.**

That was a hard month.

He always got a bit nostalgic when he opened his journal. He had kept one all his life, at least as long as he could remember. And he was about to keep it again. He fingered the page lightly, almost reverently as he turned the pages to the first open spot. He found it just under the entry he put in three days ago after his meeting with the Co of Jump 7. It was only two lines long. It read simply,

January 23, 2681

More Waiting.

I'm starting to get a bad feeling about this.

Those two short lines said everything he felt about his mission. The only thing he knew for sure about it was that he would be joining the crew of the Experimental SR7 _Normandy_ and that despite whatever the news reports were saying this was definitely not a test run of a new ship.

He had been lifted from Neylon 5 about eight days ago by Alliance transport and since he had been dropped off here three days ago he hadn't done a lot. As it turns out his gut was right about the _Normandy_ being important. As soon as he arrived the Commanding officer of The Station, a Sangheilli Admiral called him to his office to give him his next orders. He would await the arrival of the SR7, once it arrives he would then join the crew and assist in whatever ways that were required by Captain Anderson.

He had to stifle a laugh when he heard the Admiral give the orders. He could honestly say that he had been expecting it. After his searching on the ride to the station had been spent investigating everything he could about the ship and its crew. He actually found it interesting that he had guessed it. But then, it wasn't that hard to figure out. An experimental ship lead by a captain that is way to over qualified to be flying it, and the one and only Spartan IX would be on the same station at the same time? Two and two really does equal four, who knew?

John reached for his mug and took a long drink of coffee. He had been looking over his gear since he had arrived on station, calibrating, cleaning, and checking over his weapons, ammunition, and armor. It was all fine of course he kept all of his things in pristine condition, but that left him with little to do, and he was anxious. So he finally resorted to writing, or rather, reading his journal. His mom, Alex had given it to him shortly after she and James adopted him, saying that if he couldn't talk to them, then maybe he could write it down. At that time he didn't have a lot to say, but he wrote a lot. He filled one whole journal that first year. He still had it in his pack. It was one of very few things he had kept from his past when he had become a Spartan. All of those sat on the desk where his journal was laying. There were four items; his journals, there were four of those now, his sisters locket with a small holographic projector in it but it was broken, he never could bring himself to fix it, a small framed family picture, and his dad's old combat knife which he wore everywhere he went.

He smiled lightly at some of the memories that came to his mind while he looked at the memoirs and frowned at others. After a few more sips of coffee and a few more smiles he turned his eyes back to the open

page before him and wrote.

January 26, 2681

_I'll be leaving in an hour to start my next mission. I still don't know what I'm to do, but whatever it is, it will defiantly be interesting. I'll be serving with Captain David Anderson on an experimental warship. Turns out that our ships now require a war hero to give it the okay to enter our fleets. _

_Well, not really, but that's what him leading the mission makes it look likeâ€| it really makes me wonder who all fell for that plot? Despite what the big wigs may think, people really aren't that stupid, well, some of them are, but most aren't. I mean, how much of a billboard can you post up to plaster in front of everyone's eyes that this is a cover for some top secret operation? First you have the captain, then there's the crew of near super humans, and then there's that mysterious pit stop at the Tural Nebula. I know what's in there, but I can't talk about that here, but suffice it to say, that if they stopped, and I know they did, they must have taken on a very 'unique' passenger or a 'very special' package. And if that's not enough, get this. I have the feeling again. _

Something big is going to happen in this mission. Don't know what, but something is coming. Guess I need to be on my guard more than usual huh? Well, whatever is going on, I'll be ready for it; it is my job to be ready for these situations, after all. This is certain to get interesting real quick.

_Still doesn't change the fact that I wish I was still on Neylon with Nell, or on Prometheus with Jean. Though, she would probably just have more tests to run on me or new "Experimental" equipment she wants me to try out for her, that didn't work out too well last time, I nearly lost an arm to that ridiculous weapons gauntlet she had me test, and to top it all off she wanted me to be her first human teleportation test case. She thinks I'm mad at herâ€| I should be, but I can't stay mad at her, she is just a kid after all. _

_Maybe hanging out with Wolf or Kevin hunting Covenant on the fringe would be safer. That assignment was awesome, no lie. Hunting Brutes, Sangheilli, and Kig-Yar Loyalists hiding out in the middle of nowhere. Even had to fight off a few Drinol and a Thresher maw or two. Those things are dangerous. _

Wellâ€| whatever it is I want to do, I can't really do it right now, so maybe I should just head on over to the dock and wait for my ride to show upâ€|

Yah, I think I'll do that.

I'll write again later.

With that John ended his entry and started packing his things. With quick methodical movements he closed his journal added it to the stack of three others and places them into a hidden compartment inside his bag, those were quickly followed by his sisters locket, and the family photo. The knife he pressed into the sheath that was set on his left shoulder. After locking in the knife he zipped up his bag

He had one bag that held all of his personals. Those included his memoirs, a couple changes of clothes, and additional weapons and munitions. Since he usually wore his armor and weapons he didn't really need a bag for those. Once he had backed his things into his bag he slung it over his shoulder, walked to the door, and did a once over of the room. It was clean and devoid of any evidence that he had used it. Just the way he liked it.

With that done he turned, activated his helmet, opened the door and stepped out into the hall then turned left and made his way for the docks by the time his door shut his head was encased in the grey-green of the Spartans.

Even though it was early the station was already bustling with activity. Personnel were walking to their stations to take over the next shift, and whole platoons were starting their daily training routines while drill sergeants yelled at them to keep up and stay in formation. This wasn't unusual at any hour on a jump station, since they served as a massive floating military barracks most rookies find themselves serving most of their training time on one of them. John himself had served most of his time in boot camp on Jump Station 3 before he was sent to the Special Forces Academy.

Some of the soldiers saluted him as he walked by, to which he saluted back, but for the most part, as the massive Spartan hiked his way to the N-section dock most of the people in the station quickly got out of his way. At one point a whole platoon stopped in their tracks did a right face and saluted the Spartan, John obliged them with a quick precise turn and a sharp return salute. Then the drill instructors bore down on them. They'd pay for that maneuver. But John had done it himself when he was in training and knew from experience that it was totally worth it.

He chuckled lightly to himself as he boarded an elevator that took him down three levels to the N-section also known as the Special Forces Barracks. A short walk down another hall had him facing a large window overlooking the docks. Most of them had ships docked for resupplying or dropping off cargo and personnel, if they needed repair or refitting they would be docked in the docking bay on the Stations lowest levels. But only one of the ten docks reserved for the N-Section had a ship in it. It wasn't N-3. In two minutes he found himself standing at the window overlooking the N-3 Dock. Once there he set his bag on the floor and stood at rest. It was there he stayed for the next 45 minutes awaiting the _Normandy_.

* * *

><p>Pilot Jeff Moreau sat back into his reclined pilot's seat as he enjoyed the view of open slip-space. The plethora of colors that sped by was truly Mind-boggling. Surly nothing could be as beautiful as the rainbow of slip-space. But he would never admit that to a living breathing Sentient.<p>

"Isn't it just beautiful?" A decidedly Female voice broke his thoughts as the Sangheilli officer to his rear left, his co-pilot, Lanoe 'Donii, spoke.

Turning his thoughts to the Beautiful Sangheilli woman sitting at the sensory array Terminal he replied. "Oh, Yeah. I've always wanted to stare at absolutely nothing." Which, technically, he was.

She smile broke at that as she reared her hand back and smacked him across the back of the head.

"Hey, Ow. What was that for!"

She only shrugged and went back to her work, "For being an ass."

Laughter burst out from his right. From the Hologram platform to his right the green and orange body of the ships Ai, Donna materialized. "You totallyâ€¦ deserved that." She put in between laughs.

Right then they all heard deliberate footsteps coming to the cockpit. Donna Stopped her laughter and Lanoe just smiled while Joker Treated his new bump. The approaching feet turned out to be none other than their prestigious Captain, David Anderson. He stopped directly behind Joker. "Status report, Joker. How's our progress?"

"Good captain, we should be dropping into real-space in a little less than four minutes.

Anderson Nodded. "What about the ship, everything holding together?"

Joker held back a sigh. This was getting old. "Beautifully Captain. I've never flown a finer ship. She's twice as fast as any cruiser I've flown and could out fly a Raptor." He answered in a tone that barely bordered on professional; he had been asked that question more times than he could care to count during this trip.

"How long till we reach Jump 7." The Captains reply was curt, professional. _Typical, trying to get anything but Professional out of this guy is like squeezing water out of a rock. _Only a few moments ago he had sent a message to the Captain telling him that they were nearing Jump 7 and that they would be "dropping from Slip-space in 5" which was a revolutionary feat. They had set off from Talana Space station, a spaceport sitting clear on the opposite end of Alliance Space, only two weeks ago. Normally a trip of that length would take nearly a month, even in the most advanced of Sangheili ships. But the Normandy SR7, the only SR7 model thus far, has made the trip in half of that time thanks in no small part to the Colossal, and Experimental, Tantalus Drive Core, a sister model of the Kalvern-slip-space-drive. The experimental ship had more than met its high expectations for speed.

"_But that was only one test of many, Joker. We still have the new stealth system, the plasma cannons, the new mini-MAC, and the maneuvering systems to test yet._" Joker thought to himself.

"You're just in time Captain." Donna interrupted with a smile. "We should be coming up on the station inâ€¦" She raised a green holographic brow at joker.

With a light harrumph he looked to his Console and brought up the "Jump Time" with the light pressing of three Holographic keys. With a beep, a timer came onto the screen

Without even looking at the timer Joker said, "we'll be dropping out of Slip-Space in less than 2 minutes. After that it will be a short

flight. Ten minutes, tops."

To which Captain Anderson just gave a nod. "Good work Joker; I'm heading down to the hatch to greet our guest." With that the Captain turned on his heels and marched down the hall. Once he was out of earshot Lanoe jumped in. "Ok, last chance Joker. Who do you think we'll be picking up at Jump-7?"

He snorted. Shortly after they had set off on their test voyage and the crew was fully informed of what their route would include all sorts of wild rumors and bets had been flying around in regards to who they would be picking up at the jump Station. And the ridiculousness of the claims were only inflamed when the Spectre had been picked up during a pit stop to the secret military/science facility hidden in the Tural Nebula six days ago. "Probably just another Goody-two-shoes Officer that gets paid a whole lot more than me. That alone is STILL reason enough for me not to care." Which was a lie, inside he was dying to know who they were picking up, but he had spent most of his life building a rep as a snarky, smart ass with an unfathomable love of sarcasm. A reputation he planned to keep as long as he could.

Lanoe threw a disapproving look at him, but before she could make a comment another voice broke in. "I'll tell yah who it is." Corporal Jenkins, a member of the Marine complement aboard the Normandy came into the cockpit and took a seat in the only available chair, directly opposite Lanoe's position.

"How do you know who it is Jenkins?" Donna Looked Skeptical and Lanoe was intently interested, And Joker put a mask of indifference on his face.

The young marine swung around in his chair and Grinned with Impish delight. "You guys wouldn't believe me if I told you." It was obvious He was excited about something.

"That's not fair Jenkins." Lanoe almost sounded whiny. "You can't just get our hopes up then tear them down like that."

"Come on Jenkins, you may as well tell us." Donna broke in. "It's not like it's anything that the rest of the crew hasn't thought of already."

"I seriously doubt that guys." Killing looks from all around. "Alright, fine." He took a deep breath. "Ok, a friend of mine is in training for SpecOp and his squad just landed at Jump 7, he just sent me a message telling me how he and his squad just met a Spartan IIX while heading to registration."

"So what," Joker commented. "There are probably a dozen Spartans on that station right now."

Jenkins smiled and continued. "Well, he said the Spartan was standing at the N-3 Dock waiting for an experimental ship to arrive." From the blank stares he received he figured he needed to explain. ", technically, we are riding in a Special operations Vessel and there can't be THAT many experimental ships flying around right now about to dock with Jump 7."

"No way," Joker refuted with a wave of his hand. "Spartans are

special operatives that are worth a lot more than this little mission we're on. Heck, he's probably worth more than ten times what it took to build this ship. No offense Donna."

"Now wait just a second." Donna tried to interrupt.

Joker ignored her. "He's probably just waiting for a cruiser to pick him up for an assault on a smuggler stronghold or a secret Covenant base. If he's even there." Before anyone, including the 'now growling' Donna, could retort, "Hang on a sec," he pressed a key on his console then spoke, his voice echoing throughout the Normandy's speakers. "All crew members prepare for inertial shift. Dropping out of Slip-space in 10 seconds"

The Crew waited. A few seconds later came the familiar sensation of falling as the Normandy Dropped out of the Rainbow of Slip-space into the eternal black, star dotted void of Real-space opening the cockpit to the view of the Rokel System. Just a few hundred klicks to the Normandy's right rested Jump-Station-7 in all its gleaming Titanium A-5 plated glory, it looked like all the rest of them, a giant metal cylinder with rams coming out at even intervals down its length. And nearly 6 thousand kilometers ahead of them rested the garden world of Delvin Prime.

Joker went to contact the Captain but he beat him to it. "Joker, head to dock. Our guest is waiting. After we pick him up we'll refuel and resupply."

"Ay, Captain." then there was a beeping. They were being hailed. _ Probably by Jump-7._ Joker thought

He took a breath but Donna stopped him with a hand, "Already on it Joker."

While Donna was receiving communicating with the traffickers Jenkins pulled a credit chit out of his pocket and smiled. "I'll bet you fifty bucks that we dock at N-3."

"Ohh, you are so on." Joker was positive that there was no way they were picking up a Spartan, much less an IIX, what he said was true. They were ridiculously valuable to the Alliance and where ever you saw one, you knew that Shit had hit the fan. He knew their mission (this was defiantly not a test run, attendance of Spectre and their Dear old Captain attested to that) it was bound to be important. But important enough for a Spartan? No freaking way. He had that fifty buck in the bag.

A few moments later there was another series of beeps as the Normandy received docking information. "Ok, dock at Pier N-3. Our "Guest" is waiting there."

Joker and Jenkins yelled at the same time

"What?"

"YES!"

Jenkins smiled happily and held out an open hand to Joker. "Time to pay up dude."

Joker grudgingly handed him a fifty chit along with a few mumbles that Jenkins was glad he didn't hear.

Very little was said as they came closer to the colossal station but once they reached the dock. There, standing in the long window overlooking Pier n-3 from only sixty meters away, was standing a single person. Joker gasped when his sharp eyes caught his movements. "Holy Crap!"

"What is it?" Lanoe and Jenkins said at once.

Joker ignored them, merely pointing at the window, "Donna, zoom in on that guy in the window."

"Why-"

"Just do it." Joker cut off

She just sighed as a holographic screen materialized on front of them and zoomed onto the man watching the Normandy dock. As the screen came into focus they all gasped

Lanoe was wide eyed, "Ancestorsâ€¦ is that?"

"Yep," Donna served, "only one type of soldier wears that uniform." Said soldier was standing in the center of the window. He appeared to stand a little over seven feet tall and he was wearing a Full-Body cast of heavy dark green/grey combat armor plated over a dark gray Kevlar-23 body-glove, though the gauntlets, forearm bracers, boots, belt, and back were slightly larger than they had to be. Other than that, the soldier appeared to be armed for war. A heavy pistol rested in a clamp on the man's left leg, and a sleek submachine gun of equal caliber rested on his right. A heavy-duty combat knife was set on his left shoulder and the butt of a sniper-rifle poked out over his right shoulder, anything else he wore on his back was hidden by his body size. His utility belt held bags and pouches that could hold only god knows what. There were other dangerous asset on his calves, thighs, and under his arms, but those were grenades, spare ammo packs or smaller arms that looked like backup weapons. And lastly, on the man's left shoulder a gold Spartan helm was painted into a Silver band under the Alliance crest, a red, white, and blue eagle holding an arrow and an olive branch flying inside the arch of a silver chevron.

It was the classic image of a Spartan. A man/woman decked out in armor that looks more fitting for a heavy assault tank and more than enough weapons and ammunition to arm a platoon.

They all heard the docking clamps take hold of the ship and the entry ramp and loading ramp clamp into place.

Joker was breathless. "It's a Spartan..."

"Told you so," Jenkins said happily as he pocketed his winnings and left the cockpit

* * *

><p>John Watched as the silvery destroyer drifted into dock. It was a design he hadn't seen before except in the pictures he had seen on

his trip here. The main body looked like a cross between that of a sharp and dangerous human Destroyer and the only slightly less utilitarian and avian design that the Turian Hierarchy favored, long and sleek, just like a predator Hawk. Both completely too rough to be anything but a human ship; and also too artful to be a human Vessel. It was honestly a strange and not unpleasant mix of two separate worlds.<p>

"Nice ship." He said to no one in particular although he still saw the wings as a waste of building material. He hefted his bag and walked to the Dock inspecting the ship along the way. As he walked he could pick out the laser projectors and missile pods on the ship's hull. There was even a projector of some type on the center of the front side ship, he figured there was another one on the opposite side. It looked something akin to the 'Sunder Cannons' which could only be explained as the human version of the Plasma projector. But those were too big to put on ships this small. As he drew closer he saw several people waiting at the ramp, six in all. Two of them, due to the Heavy armor and rifles they wore, were obviously marines. The third was dressed in lighter armor, but still that of a marine, _"Probably a sniperâ€¦| "_then his mind stopped for a full second as he thought of one other possibility."_Or he's an adeptâ€¦| I'm not that threatening am I?"_ He laughed quietly at his own joke.

Men numbers 4 and 5 were dressed in naval officer's uniforms. 4 wore the rank of a 1st Lieutenant and on the neck and shoulders of 5's uniform were the gold bars of a ship Captain; it was no other than Captain David Anderson. He looked just like he did in his pictures, average height, strong build, dark brown skin, and black hair shaved low. He knew the Captain wouldn't recognize him, even if he didn't have his helmet on; they'd only met each other once, on Torfan. And despite what some Spartans did to personalize their suits, they still look identical to anyone that didn't spend a lot of time around them.

The last man, if he could call him that, was a Turian. The Turian's skin was a light shade of red, almost rosy and he wore a heavy set of combat armor. The white ink tattoo on his face was familiar; it took him a moment to remember he had fought beside a turian with the same markings when Alliance personnel were dispatched to rescue a Citadel ship that had crashed on an uncharted world in Alliance Space when they were assaulted by Covenant forces. _"Kuryil, that was his nameâ€¦|_", they had even become something akin to friends, before Kuryil took a bullet to the head. John had never gotten around to asking about the tattoo's though.

After the few long strides that left the Spartan standing in front of the men he snapped a crisp salute to the Captain. While the other three men didn't shift their position their faces did show visible surprise and slight unease for the new comer. The last person they would have expected to join their crew would have been a Spartan.

Captain Anderson returned the salute. "Spartan, it's good to have you aboard the Normandyâ€¦| I assume that you have been briefed on our mission?"

"No, sir, I had been informed that I would be briefed during transit." This was something that had made John obscenely curious about this mission. Very rarely, well, actually it's more like never

was a Spartan NOT BRIEFED about his or her mission, a Spartan was the highest special operative within the Alliance military. It's almost unheard of to be given a mission that you won't know what you are doing until you arrive on scene. Ever since his meeting with the Admiral 3 days ago he had researched for what that meant. In the last 300 years there had been less than a dozen instances when a Spartan was not given specific mission parameters by the board. The first of these was John-3-117's mission to the first Halo.

At that the Captain just nodded as if that is what he had been expecting. "Then we should get you up to speed, but first, introductions. I am Captain David Anderson commanding officer of the Normandy." He gestured to the bright silvery Vessel that was obviously the "Normandy" then he continued to introduce the Soldiers beside him.

Captain Anderson turned to the other officer, "this man is First Lieutenant William Pressly the Normandy's Executive Officer and head navigator." He motioned to the possible adept, "This man here is Second Lieutenant Kaiden Alenko. Mr. Alenko is the head of the Marine Complement aboard the ship," then he turned and motioned to the Turian. "And this good man here is Nihlus Kryik, a Council Spectre."

The Spectre nodded to John and offered a hand, which the Spartan took full heartedly, but not too much so, he was a Spartan after all, and with the slightest squeeze he could crush the bones in the Turian's hand.

"Spartan, I have yet to have had the honor of working with one of your people. But I have heard only good things." from John's personal experience with Turians he could tell the slight movement of his mandibles was the Turian equivalent of a smirk. "I look forward to us working together."

John smile under his helmet and nodded lightly in understanding. "Likewise, Spectre."

Captain Anderson's eyes gleamed for a moment as he studied the Spartan. "Now that introductions are out of the way, head inside. Lieutenant Alenko will show you to your quarters. Meanwhile, Nihlus and I have Business on the station. I should be back within the hour." Then he walked into the Station followed closely by Nihlus.

John turned to the remaining group as soon as they were out of ear reach.

Pressly's eyes held his for a moment before his face brightened into a smile; he offered a hand which John took. "Welcome to the Normandy Sir, like Captain Anderson said, I'm his XO. If you need anything during your stay please feel free to ask and we will try to get it done to the best of our ability."

"I'll keep that in mind Lieutenant Pressly."

"Please, just call me Pressly; we'll probably be working together for a while, so I don't think the formality is necessary."

"Very well Pressly," John acknowledged. "Lead the way."

He didn't seem to take offense that the Spartan didn't offer a name. Most of them wouldn't, that was a privilege saved for only close friends or other Spartans

Pressly led the way through the Normandy's Airlock, which, as Pressly described, would but them on the _Normandy_'s second deck which contained the crew quarters, mess, armory, and the med bay. As it cycled he described the layout of the Normandy and how the days ran on board. Once through the airlock, they entered a average sized room with a door on all four walls. Above each was a label. The door they came through was labeled; Hatch. The door to their right; Med-bay. To their left; Armory, and directly ahead of them; MessAfter they entered the ship he got a call from the flight deck asking him to help out with a navigational error.

"oh, I need to get this fixed." He motioned to Kaiden. "can you finish the tour?"

"Sure Pressly, I got it covered."

"you're a credit to the Uniform Alenko." He said as he disappeared on the other side of the mess hall door.

"He's a good Guy, real friendly and a hard worker. He's a good exec."

"A good friend of mine once said a good XO was worth more than his weight in bullets. I find myself agreeing with the assessment."

Kaiden nodded solemnly. "I probably would too if my uniform was an armory."

John just laughed till tears were in his eyes. He had to collapse his helmet to wipe them away. He just left it down as he turned to the Lieutenant. "You know, that's the same that everyone says, but go ahead and laugh it up, cause when I'm the only one out there with ammo and working guns you guys always come running."

Kaiden didn't believe that for a second, but he had never fought beside a Spartan before."So | you keep enough ammo and weapons to outfit a platoon in case someone comes calling for ammo or a gun?"

"No, I keep them for me. It just never hurts to have extras." John smiled. "There was a time when I thought the same way you do. But that was before I ran out of everything except my bare hands and my brain."

Kaiden pursed his lips. "well, I wouldn't know about that. I've never been in that situation."

"hope that you don't, it sucks, but point taken"

Kaiden smirked and lead john into the armory, it was a small room with racks full of rifles and pistols and grenades. In the middle of the room sat a couple of tables and a console on a work table. There were about a dozen lockers against the inside wall all marked with their own name. The marine's personal lockers.

Kaiden motioned around the room "Welcome to our Armory. Where we store, you guessed it, rifles, pistols, and grenades galore." He grimaced as he finished the rhyme. "I know, corny rhyme, stillâ€¦ you get the point. We have a fully stocked work bench for any additions you want to make to your weapons and/or any refit or repair that may or may not become necessary. Over on that wall we have the ground team lockers, only six of them are in use at the moment so feel free to claim any of the open ones. Just type your name into the display and set a code. I'll be waiting In the mess, Spartan."

John acknowledged him with a nod. "Thanks Kaiden," but before he could walk out the door John stopped continued. "And Lieutenant."

He turned and looked the Spartan in the eye, "Yah?"

"Call me Shepard."

He just slowly smiled and saluted. "Ay, Shepard." Then he turned and left the room.

John just smiled, he'd made a friend.

In five minutes he had his Armor and weapons stored and he was dressed in his military fatigues and Combat boots.

As he stepped through the door into the mess hall he thought that if the rest of the crew were as interesting as Kaiden and Pressly, then this was going to be an interesting assignment indeed.

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: TechnologyWeapons/Alliance**

**Though the United Systems Alliance are considered by their own standards as a powerful Tier 2 civilization most of their weaponry is not energy based. The majority of the weaponry they develop still use metal projectiles. **

Much like the Citadel Councils weapons, ammunition is universal and consists of a block of metal that has been specially built to produce rounds that hold up to the exceedingly high speeds at which their weapons fire them. But unlike the Citadel Council, the USA holds to the fact, that when it comes to weapons, bigger is always better. the rounds their weapons fire are, on average, over ten times the size of the average Citadel round, this very heavy mass, added to the mass effect of the Element Zero cores in their weapons allow them to fire rounds with a power that is currently unattainable to Citadel firearms, though they cannot fire as many shots per 'clip' they are much more lethal weapons,

**There is one drawback, however, to this method of design. The Alliance does not include aim correction technology so their Soldiers must learn how to "compensate" for Atmosphere and weather Alliance, however, does not consider this a disadvantage. Claiming that the training that their soldiers go through, make them even more capable and equipped than any in the Citadel military. It also teaches them to not depend on technology to do their job. **

* * *

><p>i know that with how he's dressed and the talk of ammo and weapons will probably spark some curiosity about the Alliance's weapons so here is a codex for it.****

****Whew... are these chapters getting longer, or is that just me?

>... that is a word count of 5,995 (actual chapter+codex) WOW, i did not think i could do it... that's practically a 6k word chapter. i have impressed myself.

****And, Yes, I know that i changed the Normandy, the Normandy in the game just did not make any sense to me, so i botched it and remade it for this story.

>**

****on another note; I feel like I've been writing John as a thing more than a person, maybe it's just me, but that's what i think when i read this. so this chapter I tried to delve into a bit more feeling, a bit more of his emotional side, Via the journal entries, so tell me how i did if you wouldn't mind sparing a few moment of your time on a review :) and be honest.****

**** I do allow anonymous reviews in case some of you are wondering...****

****as always, if you have any questions, thoughts, naggings, or things that you found just plain stupid, please review,

>**

****PS. i just found out that i can reply to a review! i didn't know i could do that :D so I'll try and get back with you if you give a review

>**

****as usual, i shall update when I'm able.

>**

7. Part 2: Chapter 7: Prep for drop

Hey people, Infini0n Here,

in case you have already read this chapter, note that this an update did not change the actual chapter content. i just corrected a few flaws with the Codex entry that i realized after reading a review from a reader. and corrected abit of content that I just didn't like. hope it flows a bit better now :D.

thank you to Dark Pheonix Jake for pointing that out to me

* * *

><p>"Our Legacy"

Part Two: A Traitor In Our Midst.

**Chapter 7: "Prep For Drop". **

****Date: January 31, 2681 ****

****Time: 0603 hrs.****

****Location: USAS SR7-1 **_**Normandy**_** en route to Eden Prime

*** * ***

><p>January 31_st__, 2681 _

Okay, this is easily the most uninformed I've ever been on a mission. I've already been on the ship for 5 days and Captain Anderson has yet to give me any details on the mission I'll be undertaking. Am I hunting pirates? Uncovering drug cartels? Writing down my life story so that they can put it into a time capsule so that two million years from now someone will dig it up and know that I liked my lasagna a little on the burnt side because my mom couldn't cook anything more complicated than a PBJ or a bowl of Raman? I really have no clue. Literally, no clue. All the crew and I know is that we are flying to Eden Prime to doâ€| something. And that doesn't even make that much sense. Eden Prime is a colony that is only twenty years old making it a relatively new settled planet that is not quite on the fringes of Alliance space. It is heavily populated with nearly two-hundred million citizens. That is a very high number for such a recent addition due mainly to its utterly perfect atmosphere and its unusually rich and peaceful ecology. But despite the high population crime is nearly nonexistent and no raiders or pirates would try for it due to the small fleet of several dozen destroyer class vessels manned by the Eden Prime military reserve. But that's beside the point

The point is that this is the third most peaceful planet in Alliance space with only nine criminal offences reported in the past year and only two homicides in the past twenty. So what, if I may ask, is a War hero, a Spectre, and a Spartan doing here? I can definitely tell that it is something important, otherwise Nihlus and I would not be involved, but why am I not being informed. All I've done for the past several days is check every individual piece of my gear over a dozen times, recite to myself the past tense of every verb in over a dozen different languages, put in a few hundred rounds into the FATS in the gym, brush up a little on my reading, familiarize myself with the layout of the Normandy, and get stared at funny when a few crew members walked in on me Squatting a tonâ€|

Okâ€| I'll admit that that must have been a little freaky on their part. And since then I've had more than a few funny looks turned my way as I walk by. They think I don't see their eyes following me down the hall as I walk by. It's getting annoying, I'll admit, but I think I'll let them have their fun. As long as they do their jobs and whatever their thinking doesn't get in the way I really don't care what they think about, anyway.

_I won't bother listing any theories about why I'm here, the only thoughts I have about it would be the kind I'd have to shoot you if you read it. It's just so dang vexing when you know absolutely nothing about what you're being sent to do. I just need to keep up the farce and act like it's not disturbing me. They will tell me eventually. Until then, I'll just have to be patient. But like I

said, Vexing_

_In other news, there have been a recent string of very interesting and veryâ€| distressing reports of massive fleets moving around on the Far fringes. Everyone is starting to think that the Covenant is prepping up for something huge. And I mean something on the Covenant/Human War scale kind of huge. That would partially explain why that fleet was in Neylon 5â€| partially. There haven't been this many sightings and events for nearly a hundred years and every person in the alliance is getting a little nervous. _

It's starting to look like we may soon have another Incursion on our hands... that's the absolute last thing that we need.

On that happy note, I'll go and get myself some breakfast.

_Until next time WYL _

With that John finished his entry and closed up his journal placed it into the personal locker next to his bed and locked it up and spun his chair around to stare blankly at the back wall of his room.

Another incursion, so soon.

This was a terrible development. The last Covenant war, what the Alliance has dubbed the term Covenant Incursion IV had ended barely four years ago. And was by record one of the most brutal yet. It may not have cost as many lives as the others, but it's sheer brutality made up for it so much so that many of the greatest Historians and Anthropologists claimed it bordered on the same level as was seen during the Holocaust in the mid twentieth century on earth. But what made it worse was the fact that the Alliance was currently in a state of cold war. With the many disagreements between the Citadel council and the Alliance Board this was, indeed, the absolute last thing that they needed. Right now everyone needs to spend all their resources to find a way to keep a peace. Not spend lives, resources, and money on one war that could potentially start another that would span on to the galactic scale and possibly cause the extinction of over a dozen races. That would be bad.

After sitting there for a few moments John rubbed his clean-shaven chin thoughtfully then cast the dark thoughts from his mind and with two long strides he left the room. It took him a few moments to reach the end of the hall and step into the mess. With a quick look he deduced that it was empty. Just the way that he liked it.

Based on the operational times of the Normandy's crew, he knew it most likely would be, but sometimes when he would get breakfast there was a straggler or two that had yet to get to their assigned positions or those that had yet to hit the sack.

In a few short steps he made his way to the dispenser and selected a paste with the flavor of a buttermilk blueberry waffle. In the next moment a tube was dispensed, he snatched it and in three quick gulps downed its contents.

Delicious.

Usually soldiers never got used to eating paste from a tube as their

meals, but after living with it for nearly 19 years John had grown used to it. Actual solid food was a rare and precious occurrence in the life of an alliance soldier.

After that he just sat down for a few minutes at one of the tables and opened the files he had gathered on Eden prime once more. When you were a Spartan, there wasn't a lot to do on a ship apart from read, clean your equipment, and train. Since he had already done all three of those in ample supply over the course of the short six day jaunt from Jump 7 to Eden prime he had run out of things to do to keep himself occupied which he found left him in a slightly sour mood. Normally he didn't have this problem. Usually he would get assigned a mission and all the information he would need to carry it out then whatever time he didn't use in prep he would spend in a Regen-tube recovering from injuries that he had gathered on the previous mission.

That is how he had lived for the past 9 years. His once a year vacations have even ended up turning into assignments more often than not. But that never really bothered him. At least he had something to do instead of just sitting around doing nothing. He was never really any good at just sitting around.

He had even explored the ship and found two M40-FAV's, more commonly known as Wart Hogs, and a Heron dropship sitting in the Hold. He was impressed with the find. Most Alliance ships carried Model 30's because they were well built, easy to manufacture, and they had a really good rep since they were put into operation 40 years ago. The Model 40 has only been around for 6 and though it was definitely superior to the M30's it was also much more expensive. But John couldn't complain. They were top of the line tools, and any top of the line tool was sure to make his job much easier. With the two hogs, the Heron, the armory, and the 12 man marine complement the Normandy had everything a soldier could need for a small ground assault.

The only thing he could really do right now was familiarize himself a little bit more with Eden Prime and it's population so he swiped a coffee from a dispenser on the wall took a seat and got to reading.

The next few hours went by rather slowly for John. He got up a couple of times to refill his coffee and saw a few people come and go as they ate then went to bed or went to their stations, none of them bothered the large Spartan sitting alone at the far table. He was glad they saw reason. He also noticed that Nihlus hadn't been stalking him this morning. Which is a fact that he took to be ratherâ€¦|_Curiousâ€¦|_

He managed to read his way through most of the material on Eden primes military defenses when his clock showed he had a little over an hour till they dropped.

With that in mind he broke off from his reading, closed his PC then made his way to the Armory. Since it was on the port-side of the Cafeteria he only needed to travel about a dozen paces. Once inside he activated his locker and waited for it to retrieve his gear from the lookup in the ships hold.

It took all of 13 seconds.

As he reached into the locker the speakers clicked and their pilot's voice broke out over the comms. "Normandy, this is your pilot speaking, in a few moments we will be making out last check stop. After our final diagnostic we will make the final jump to Eden Prime. Prep for drop!"

Then he felt a slight inertial shift. "Ah, the last diagnostic stop. About time they got that out of the way."

As per the operation protocols every alliance ship was required to perform a diagnostic after their first twelve jumps, to ensure proper calibration and construction of the Slip-space engines. Most people would say that it was unnecessary but since the Alliance had put the act into practice 37 years ago, there have been no ships lost due to Slip-Space misplacement so at least no one was complaining about it. It seems that joker thought it would be a good idea to get it done before their mission officially began.

With mechanical movements that were born out of incessant practice and necessity he assembled his armor and checked over his weapons and equipment one last time before magnetically clamping them onto their respective places on his thighs, belt, boots, and back. It took him not a moment over seven minutes to gear up but once he did, he was ready for action. His armory was back where it belonged" on his back.

He smiled lightly at the jest remembering what Kaiden had said when they'd first met and left the room intent on making his way to his room where he planned on getting a little more reading done when he caught sight and sound of Doctor Chakwas and Corporal Jenkins talking while getting something to eat from the dispensers.

"I'm telling you doc, there is something the captain isn't telling us about this mission."

Chakwas laughed and shook her head at that, "Ha, you watch too many spy vids, Jenkins."

"How do you explain that a Spectre and a Spartan are involved then? Spectre's aren't even allowed into Alliance space without top level clearance. And Spartan 9001" there is absolutely no way that ONI would pull him away from patrolling the outer fringe without a very good reason. I mean, have you seen that guy. He looks like a modern day God of War. "

Chakwas crossed her arms as she replied, "That's crazy, the captain wouldn't hand pick the crew then not tell us what was going on."

"Wouldn't be his choice doc," then he added suspiciously "ONI's ultimately in charge of anything that runs in intelligence in the Alliance and trust me" they've got their hands in everything"

"Correction, Jenkins., you watch 'Way' to many spy vids" she replied exasperated.

John smiled under his helmet; he just HAD to get in on this. As he walked up they continued speaking back and forth. They were both

turned to the dispensers which Jenkins was currently trying to get a coffee from. Chakwas already had hers and was sipping from the steaming cup contentedly. Since they were faced away from him they didn't notice him even after he stopped right behind them.

"You know, ONI doesn't technically have their hand in everything, they just hear about most of the things going on and can act accordingly. That is what an intelligence agency is supposed to do isn't it?"

The moment he spoke, Jenkins spun around like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Chakwas' turn was a bit more controlled and refined. At least she hid her surprise better, all she did was take in a full body look over. Jenkins' jaw dropped and his eyes went wide when he caught sight of John's massive armored (and armed) form. John couldn't help but smile at the young corporal's response to his appearance, but when he turned his eyes to look at Chakwas' youthful face his smile slightly soured. He knew her from many years ago after his mother, sister and he had survived the liberation of Shanxi. She had been the young doctor who had treated them after they had been rescued from the Turians that had assaulted his dad's ship. It's not that he didn't like Chakwas, she was a wonderful person with a quick laugh and an even quicker smile. But seeing her did bring up some bad memories. Thankfully his helmet was sealed so they didn't see his laps of facial control.

Jenkins quickly righted himself and snapped a crisp salute, which John returned he also turned a nod to the doctor in greeting and unsealed and retracted his faceplate to allow them visibility of his face.

"uh, yes sir, I just meant that technically, since ONI is responsible for SR vessels they are also in charge of this operation and that they had probably ordered the captain to secrecy regarding the mission we're on. He's hiding the real mission details from us." Once the words left his mouth he seemed horrified that he had said them, "I don't mean that he was intentionally hiding information from us, I meant that ONI had ordered him to secrecy." At this he just got more flustered.

Before he could frustrate himself any more John interrupted, "Hold up, Corporal. It's alright, I was just prodding."

When his tense composure visibly deflated John chuckled and shook his head.

"What are you two discussing so heatedly this morning?" it was only just after 9 "Problems? Concerns?"

Chakwas smiled lightly, "no problems here Spartan." She declared then sipped her coffee with both hands then with a conspiratorial raised brow directed at Jenkins continued, "Except some interesting conspiracy theories from our corporal here."

He smirked, "Really?" he turned toward the younger man, "let's hear them."

Jenkins visibly flinched and grimaced at the doctors cut down version of their discussion. "I wasn't talking about conspiracy. I was simply saying that there is nothing of import going on Eden Prime. You

forget that I grew up there Doc, it's a peaceful world with the third lowest crime rate in Alliance space and relatively little to say for itself besides it's tourist attraction for the Council races, and that's mainly due to it's relative nearness to the Charon system Mass Relay. It's only a half parsec to the relay system from Eden Prime. Not even a full ten minute jump for the average Alliance transport ship. No offense, sir, but it's not the kind of place a Spectre, or a Spartan for that matter, would visit. There's just nothing there." He looked up at the Spartan for a moment with bright eyes, "what do you think, sir? We won't be on Eden prime long will we?"

"Why do you ask?"

"It's just that I want to get to the real action. I'm here with a decorated War Hero, a Council Spectre, and an Alliance Spartan. I finally have an opportunity to show what I can do to people that can really make a difference in my career and, of all places, they have us going to Eden Prime."

Doctor Chakwas who had leaned against the wall sipping her coffee narrowed her eyes as only a military physician can. "I sincerely hope you're kidding, Corporal. Your 'real action' normally ends with me bottling up remains or patching up crew members in the infirmary."

"The Doc's right Jenkins. Don't rush into trouble just to prove how well you can get yourself killed."

"I'm sorry, sir. It's just that this waiting is killing me. I've never been on a mission like this before. Not one with a Spartan, War hero, and a Spectre on board." He didn't look very sorry.

John frowned inside, _this is how they are before they get themselves killed, I just hope he can live long enough to grow out of it. _"Just stay calm, keep your head down, and your nerves under control. Do that and treat this like every other mission you've been on and you should be fine."

"Easy for you to say, Sir. You're a Spartan, you're a living Legend of an entire race of hero's. But thisâ€¦ This is my chance to show the brass what I can do." Jenkins, replied, almostâ€¦ passionate.

John narrowed his eyes, "Your young, Corporal, and you have a long career ahead of you. Don't do something stupid to mess it up." He was sure to put the secret meaning behind his words. He didn't want this kid to get himself killed because of his reckless desire to show off his skill. The 'pride cometh before the fall' and all the other quotes like it are as true a statements as they come. Chakwas appeared to visibly brighten after the statement, almost as if a load had been taken off her shoulders. Seems like she was more worried about Jenkins' excitement then she let on.

Seemingly Chastened, the corporal broke eye contact. "Yes, sirâ€¦"

Their discussion was a good bit milder after that and John took advantage of Jenkins younger life on Eden prime to learn a little more about the proposed 'Humanities Paradise'. He even learned a few new things. Thanks to it's strategic spatial position, it's high

human occupation, and ridiculously harmless ecosystem the planet was a major tourist attraction for Citadel Species citizens who wanted to learn about the new Systems Alliance and they're species. It was a rather instructive and enjoyable conversation. But after a few minutes Jenkins took his leave saying that he had a prior engagement with a few of the other marines in the lounge of the crew quarters down the hall.

Both the doctor and Spartan watched the young marine walk away, tossing his empty cup into a recycle bin as he left.

As John turned to make his way up the steps Chakwas spoke.

"Thank you for talking to him. I've been trying to talk him down for days. I was getting worried that he would do something stupid, looks like your little 'warning' may have done the trick."

He turned back to look at the doctor then looked back in Jenkins direction, "he's a good kid, Doc. If what little I said will help him live longer than it was worth it. I think I may need to keep an eye on him though, if we get sent out together. Hopefully with some help, he'll live long enough to outgrow his fantasies." He paused as old memories, fond and bitter, came up to the surface of his mind. Each of them had a name and a serial number. With a mental shove he forced them back into the recesses of his mind. "Not all of us are that lucky."

She smiled lightly as she followed his gaze, "but it's good to know that people like you have his back."

John smirked and laughed quietly for a moment before replying, "More like every Alliance Marine. We watch out for our own, Doc. For a lot of us, it's the only family we have."

She smiled brightly, "I know, that's part of the reason I chose to work on warships"

"I figured as much."

After a few moments of companionable silence Chakwas spoke up, "I'd better get back to the med bay and be sure that all of the suits are filled and ready to go. You never know when you're going to need an extra Medi-gel, Medi-foam, or some Nanites."

John just stood there and looked back to where Jenkins had walked off to then shook his head and made his way to the starboard stairwell. The talk with Jenkins had him wanting to see 'Humanities Paradise' in person. And the place that he could get the best look would be the cockpit upon arrival. He hadn't ever been to the planet before and if it was anything like the stories he'd heard it might be something worth seeing. And it would give him a reason to familiarize himself a little more with their primary pilot, a very interesting young ace by the name of Jeffery Moreau.

Their first meeting from when he had explored the ship the first time had been interesting. He figured that now was as good a time as any to ensure that his relation with the young pilot was off to a good start.

In a few long strides he cleared the distance to the stairwell at the

rear of the mess hall and stepped through the automated doors and made his way up the steps to the top level of the vessel. Because the steps were sized so an Unggoy could comfortably take them one at a time he could take them at about three a stride. In a little over a dozen strides he made it to the top floor passing a young Unggoy male making his way to the mess. He stopped dead in his tracks wide eyed as the Spartan passed by.

John rolled his eyes as he passed. _They'll get used to seeing me in my armor eventually. _He knew that his visage was intimidating without the armor, but he had once been told that when he had it on he could be compared with the image of an ancient god of war. In his experience, there was only one God, and he was pretty sure that he never dressed like that. But despite this, he had seen things that were many times more intimidating than he himself was claimed to be and he had barely even flinched.

Maybe that has something to do with my military career. He mused as he came out behind the CIC. The moment the door opened and he stepped out the stairwell he was met with the sight of a dozen men and women from a half dozen races that were hard at work setting up the _Normandy_'s next Slip-Space jump, the fastest form of FTL in the known galaxy, inputting data into the dozens of terminals and computer systems that flooded the Command and Control level of the vessel.

Because it's simplicity bordered on the ridiculous The Alliance had experimented with the use of Eezo jumping when they discovered that it could be used for such about eighty years ago. But after trying to make it faster for over a decade and not reaching satisfactory results, they gave up. Though element zero made jumping simpler, it also made it dreadfully slow. A jump from one system to another nearby with Eezo doesn't take minutes or hours like it does for Slip-Space, it takes days or weeks! No wonder the Citadel races have only explored less than one percent of their chunk of the galaxy, it takes forever and then some to get there!

Tech talks, and in the words of the great Sir Isaac Newton IV, "in this particular gamut, the citadel has been weighed and found desperately wanting."

John chuckled when he imagined the phrase being spoken in the deep British accent of the Human master physicist. The man was a high soprano, and proud of the fact. But it did make it rather laughable to listen to him on occasion.

At the sound of his chuckle, a human working at the station nearest to John turned to see what was so funny. He didn't manage to utter a single word as his jaw dropped when he caught sight of John in his full Spartan garb. John decided to keep walking.

He saw Pressley in a heated discussion with a brown feathered Kig-Yar and nodded a greeting to the man as he passed which he returned without slowing his discussion. He already knew what they were talking about, from the bits and pieces that he picked up as he passed; it was about their honored guest, Nihlus, the _Turian_ Spectre. Over their last talk Pressly had made it known to him that he had a very large prejudice against any Council race because of his service in the Relay 314 Incident, known to the Alliance as the occupation of Shanxi. It had been hard on the man, and he had

harbored an very deep mistrust of Turians and every other new species since. John had commented at the time that this was a dangerous view for an officer to have. It tended to give an individual a 'shoot first and ask questions never' outlook. The navigation officer took the correction lightly enough, ensuring the Spartan that he would do his job, in spite of Bias. But John couldn't help but be glad that Pressly was just a navigations officer. It could have caused problems otherwise.

John heard the speakers come to life as Moreau's voice echoed throughout the ship. "Alright people, All systems are go and we're on our last approach vectorâ€¦ prep yourselves, we are heading into our final jump. Next stop, Eden Prime." His forward motion did not falter when he felt the sensation of falling as the ship leapt into Slip-Space for the final jump. His voice broke out over the ship again, "Arrival, T-minus 24 minutes and counting". When next they 'drop' they will be arriving in system of Eden Prime.

John made his way down a hall lined on both sides by people operating computer consoles responsible for sensors, communications, defense, and weapons systems, among dozens of other varying operations important for the ships continued operation. At the end of wall the door to the cockpit was sealed. As he neared it, it opened to reveal a red skinned Turian with white clan tattoos and heavy black and red body armor walking out. as they passed they traded nods of greeting and passed. John stopped in the center of the small room and looked around. He hadn't been in the _Normandy_'s cockpit till now and decided that he may as well add it to his mental map of the vessel. It was rather Spartan in design, really. It had four chairs, two facing forward, one belonging to the pilot and the other belonging to the copilot that shared the responsibility of flying the vessel in straight nine hour shifts. The other two chairs, one facing starboard the other port, belonged to the Chief Navigation Officer and Chief Communications Officer. Two of the four chairs were full. Jeffery, the primary pilot, sat in his throne, the left pilot's chair, sitting back letting the computer do it's work and fly the ship, every few moments he would lean forward and check a reading on one of the many holographic consoles and displays that flooded the room and all it's walls, but that was the majority of his work at the moment. The only other occupant was sitting in the seat to Jeff's right. Kaiden Alenko had apparently assisted Jeff in the final jump. Most likely not necessary, but an appreciative gesture none the less. Sitting against the wall to Jeff's left sat a holographic display on which normally, Donna, the vessels AI would be standing. Right now it was dark. She must be doing some maintenance or something of the like, most likely diagnostics.

The most eye catching part of the small room was the window that spread across the entire front and both side walls of the room that viewed directly into open space which was currently flooded with the plethoric view of the indescribable beauty of slip-space. It was theorized by scientist long ago that if a man were able to move faster than light he would see nothing but blackness. But in slip-space, where physics were very different from normal-space a man could see the things that flooded the void as they traveled at FTL speeds. And the only word in John's mental dictionary that he could use to describe the vista before him, was 'Wow'.

The moment the door sealed Jeff Sighed.

"I hate that guy."

John raised an eyebrow in the brief pause that followed.

"Nihlus gave you a complementâ€¦| Soooo you hate him?" john could tell from the tone that was sarcasm for 'yah, right, that makes perfect sense.'

"You remember to zip up your jumpsuit on your way out of the bathroom? That's good. I just cut a microscopic hole in the space-time continuum and threw us into a dimension of space that, according to a large number of leading scientists, is not even supposed to exist and, to top it all off, hit a target in this non-existent dimension of space that is smaller than the size of a pinhead. So that's increasable!"

Before either of the two could say anything in reply John spoke up, "I'll second that!"

John had to stop himself from laughing as both men spun around to stare at him.

The pilot looked mortified, Kaiden was surprised. "Where'd you come from?"

John raised a brow questioningly while looking Jeff in the eye.

"Rightâ€¦|" he visibly cringed "stupid question. How long have you been there?"

John shrugged, "since Nihlus left."

The pilots face visibly paled. "You heard all that?"

"Nope, I didn't hear a thingâ€¦|" He even said it with a straight face. Then he smirked at him and winked conspiratorially.

It took a few long moments, but slowly, Jeff's petrified face visibly brightened then it slowly turned into a smile. Then he turned back around to check a reading that had beeped.

When he turned around Kaiden prodded him in the side. "I told you he was cool."

Moreau squinted at him, "yah, maybe. We'll see. No offense Spartan."

"None taken."

Jeff looked over his shoulder at him for a few more short moments than turned back to his consoles. "I don't like having the Spectre on board, every time I see him I get this chilling feeling in my gut. Call me paranoid."

Kaiden replied swiftly. "You're paranoid. This mission has come straight from the top. ONI has a right to send whoever they want to keep an eye on their investment."

"Yeah, that is the official story. But only an idiot believes the

official story"

John got to reply first this time. "I've got to agree with you on that."

Jeff seemed to take an interest in that "Really? Why's that?"

John raised an eyebrow then stated plainly, "why else would I be here?"

"Oh, yeah. Point taken."

"Besides. I can't really fault you for having a gut feeling. That just so happens to be my motto, 'expect the worst' that way you're never surprised'."

"That's what I've been saying' there's more going on here than the captain's letting on."

Before anyone could reply, a beep came in over the comm.

The captain's voice blared out. "Joker! Status report."

Joker sighed and shook his head in defeat. Based on his reaction, Shepard figured that this was a more than normal occurrence. He hit the comm. control and replied, "Just started our Final approach. As you ordered, stealth systems are still operating at peak capacity. Everything looks solid."

The reply was immediate, even if it sounded a bit irritated. "Good. Find a comm. Buoy and link us up. I want mission reports relayed back to Alliance brass _before_ we reach Eden Prime."

"aye, aye, Captain." Looks like he was about to terminate connection but thought better of it at the last moment and keyed the control again. "Better brace yourself, sir. I think Nihlus is headed your way."

"He's already here, Lieutenant." If the pilot's response did anything, it just got him even more upset. Jeff shook his head as if to say, '_why do I bother?_'

The comm. Blared to life again. "Tell Spartan-9001 to meet me in the Briefing room for briefing."

"You get that, Spartan?"

Now it was John's turn to shake his head in annoyance. "Great, by the sound of his voice something either went terribly wrong, or' you went and pissed him off, and just when I thought we were getting to be friends. Thanks a lot."

Jeff sounded less than worried. "Pff. Captain always sounds like that when he's talking to me."

"I can't possibly imagine why." Kaiden replied, as John assumed, sarcastically. But he didn't see because he had already left the room and was heading down the hall to the rear hall behind the CIC. He nodded once again to Pressly as he passed him. Behind the galaxy map the CIC continued for another few meters and was covered in even more

consoles and displays. In the center of the rear wall however was another door that once he stepped through it, led to a hall that stretched toward the rear of the vessel. At the end of the hall was the ships elevator that traveled all four decks. On the port side of the hall had a door that lead to the Communications Room and directly opposite to it on the starboard side was the door to the Briefing Room.

In a few moments he walked through it as it opened and he stepped inside.

The Briefing room a rather large room. Maybe a little too large for its intended purpose sizing in at nearly ten meters square. With about a dozen chairs circling an oval shaped center table that he knew was equipped with built in holographic projectors that could be controlled by console, hand, or voice command. On the wall furthest from the door rested a display screen that showed whatever was being displayed on the hologram on the table. Currently it showed a picture of Eden Prime. In the room stood two people watching the screen; Captain Anderson and the Spectre, Nihlus. John figured the Spectre would also be in attendance at the meeting, for one, because he was also an individual that didn't exactly belong with the rest of the crew' and two because he basically had the same right to be on this ship right now as John himself did, which was to say, practically none at all. There were several; other reasons, but those were just theory at the moment. So to say that he hadn't been surprised to find Nihlus in the Briefing room waiting for him to show up was really a vast understatement.

As John neared the duo, he heard them speaking.

"Are you certain that he is the right one for the job. If he is notâ€¦" he let the thought rest.

After a few moment of thought the Captain replied, "We both know what the alternative is, and that is simply not an option."

"True," Nihlus conceded, nodding to Anderson's point. "It is a necessary action. But is it one our civilizations are ready for? Is it a step we are ready to take? I fear the consequences, should we fail, will be mostâ€¦ dire.

Anderson barked out a laugh, "you and me both, Spectre. You and me both."

He was almost right on top of them before they noticed Shepard walking toward them. Once they noticed him both men turned to regard the massive Spartan standing before them. Once John was several feet from them he stopped in a neat at-ease position and waited for them to begin. The silence stretched long until at last, Anderson spoke.

"Spartan," he began. "I suppose it's time to tell you what you're part in this mission really is."

John didn't move except to speak. "I would appreciate that, sir. Up to this moment I've been flying around in the dark."

"Then you can now consider yourself illuminated." Anderson supplied as he hit a control on the table. A hologram of a strange device

appeared above the table. It wasn't like anything that John had seen before, but he couldn't help but think that it looked familiar. If the measurements surrounding the holo were accurate the thing was about two and a half meters high, a few inches wide, and about a foot thick. About a foot from the bottom of the device was a pedestal that was shaped like a right triangle which it sat on. All over the device little blue and white lights flowed over its surface like a river, constantly shifting and moving across the surface of the strange metallic alloy that was its skin that glowed with a soft greenish aura. It was rather beautiful, really.

He stared at it a moment longer taking in the delicate shape of its slender design then it hit him. He ****had**** seen objects like this before. Just never a whole one. He had seen pictures and models, and pieces of it in museums of ancient civilizations. It was a Beacon, a device used to transmit information directly from mind to mind, originally developed by the Protheans over fifty-millennia prior. It was a remnant of a long dead civilization that had gone extinct over fifty-thousand years ago but everything from that time was practically useless now except for the exceptionally rare find. Well, he thought, isn't that interesting?

"This is what it's all about?" John inquired when he looked at Anderson and Nihlus who had been waiting patiently for John to finish his analysis of the item. They both looked slightly taken aback. "Don't get me wrong," The Spartan said placating. "A working Prothean Beacon is indeed an incredible find, but that still doesn't explain why you need me."

Nihlus seemed to be pleased with his deduction, but Anderson was the one to reply.

"You are absolutely right, Spartan, a Prothean Beacon on Eden Prime is a high priority target, but not quite at your level." The Human and Turian shared a knowing look. "You are here for a much moreâ€¦| important assignment."

"It is not common knowledge among the Citadel or the Alliance," Nihlus began, "but our two civilizations are barely one accident away from a galactic war." He turned to the massive display on the rear wall that still projected Eden Prime.

Anderson continued his point. "Ever since the relay 314 incident twenty-four years ago, tensions have been high. And in spite of our best efforts to broker a peace, everything we do seems to have the opposite of its intended effect."

"When you people showed mine your AI's, intending to share some of you extensive knowledge on them. We practically screamed for a war to rid the galaxy of the threat that we believe AI's pose."

"And when the Council showed the Alliance what technological feats they were capable of, we laughed. Some of us more than othersâ€¦|"

"When we shared our histories the Alliance had second thoughts of having relations with a civilization that fears drastic expansion. And my people fear yours who peruse knowledge and power with a ruthlessness that we have never seen in all of the two thousand years since the Council's founding."

John found himself frowning when they stopped, "Is this supposed to mean that there is no possibility of a peace?"

"No," Anderson answered. "it just means that, currently, the Citadel council and the Alliance have no available routes to accomplish their, as of yet, only mutual goal."

Nihlus raised a clawed hand and pointed to the hologram they stood around. "So you're Alliance Board and the Citadel council have found a solution." At his motion the holo changed to show a large room where men and women of two races in lab uniforms were working together on something that was not visible to the viewer. They were Turians and Humans. The Veiw screen showed the same scene. This dumbfounded the Spartan who knew, from personal experience, that these two races had a hatred for each other nearly as deep as that the Krogan have for the Salarrians. To see them working together, in a lab no less, was nearly unbelievable. But something that was even more interesting than the workers was what they were working on, for when one of the scientist moved away from the consoles they were teaming around, John could plainly see what was on the screens. It was the _Normandy_'s design. When he saw it, all the random pieces of information that had been floating around in his head and clogging up his thoughts that he had gathered over the course of the last two weeks snapped together and gave him the clear picture.

With more than a little awe in his voice he spoke. "The _Normandy_ was jointly built by the Turian Hierarchy and the United Systems Alliance. You combining the best our races have to offer and doing the impossible."

He raised an eye and looked at Anderson, "I assume that I am another phase of this?"

Anderson nodded, "you are correct."

Nihlus spoke up again, "Our leaders have decided that in order to further this mission of integration, we need to integrate our elite operations; The Spartans and the Spectres. We are taking the best of the best from each group and putting them together to learn from one another then they will integrate."

John knew he had discovered what his part in this was so he said it. "So my name was put forward as the first Alliance Spectre?"

Nihlus' mandibles moved into what John understood to be a Turian smile. "And mine was put forward as the First Council Spartan. Together, we will gather the Beacon and return it to the Citadel where our scientists will begin examining the object at once. Then we leave on our next assignment, of which, there are bound to be many. And we will keep working together until we have satisfied our requirements to join each other's organizations." As the room fell silent John leaned against the rail circling the tables center. Eyes looking off into oblivion, deep in thought.

This could work. He thought, elated that he would be able to assist in the prevention of a galactic war. His mind was reeling at the admission. But he hesitated to add anything else because, this move, from Spartan to Spectre, would undo what he wanted to do when he

joined the Spartans. He joined the Spartans, not because he wanted to have the full functionality of his body back, he didn't do it because he wanted to fight or to honor anyone's memory. He joined the Spartans because they were always busy. And being busy was the easiest way to escape his own mind. a lot of his memories were not pretty. Horrific would be a good word to describe them. And the constant orders from ONI is what had enabled him to continue onward. If he gave that upâ€¦

If I give this upâ€¦ it would put me right back where I was nine years ago, awash in a sea of memories that I don't want. Can I go through that again? John shook his head when he thought it. _Of course you can, Grow up John. this is the opportunity of a lifetime. An opportunity to face all your fears and worries and pummel them into the dust. And you don't even have to work that hard at it. Just do what you've been doing and start the next chapter of your life. Mom and dad raised you better than this. _

He looked Nihlus in the eye and nodded.

"Okay, let's do this."

Both men looked relieved when he coalesced.

"Good." Anderson replied, "We should be getting close to Eden-"

He was interrupted by the Comm. As he clicked to life. Then Moreau spoke to the ship. "Brace yourselves people, we drop now." Then came the shift as the Normandy once again 'fell' into real-space.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Eden Pri-" There was a beep as the Comm. Changed channels, then Jeff's voice broke out earnestly in the briefing room. "-Captain, we've got a problem."

That can't be good.

All three of the men in the room looked to the ceiling as Anderson replied. "What's wrong Joker?"

_Really?... Joker? _John would have laughed, or at least chuckled if he believed that it would have been invent mildly appropriate. But it wasn't right now, so he sealed his lips.

"Eden Prime's getting blown to shit byâ€¦. well I don't know who it is, but their ships don't look like anything I've ever seen, I'm trying to call but nothing is getting through, they must have a net over the settlements." There was a pause, but before Anderson could give an order 'Joker' spoke again, sounding even more serious than before. "A transmission came through. Donna-"

"I got it Joker." The Ai interrupted as her form solidified over the table in place of the recording that had been there moments before, her orange form pulsed lightly.

"This is not good Captain." she said as a recording started playing on the rear wall.

The recording burst to life on the screen with a _lot_ of shooting, explosions, and shouting.

"Call in an Evac NOW, Radik!" a strong female voice shouted over the din.

"On it, Sergeant," there was a quake of movement as the marine holding the camera moved so he could see it. he was a Caucasian male maybe twenty-five years old wearing dark green combat armor. When the recorder faced him he shouted, "This is Private Erin Radik of Platoon 212! We are under attack and are being overrun by an unknown hostile force! Taking heavy casualties! I repeat: Heavy casualties! We can'tâ€", the image was interrupted by a massive explosion behind the marine and the screen went white for a moment, everyone watching the screen had to turn their heads to not get blinded by the flash. When the screen cleared the camera was laying on the ground upside-down facing several marines firing toward whatever was attacking them, blue bolts of what John recognized as plasma were flying everywhere.

_Not good. _John thought. _the Covenant is attacking._

After a few long moments of loud shouting and more weapon discharges the Sergeant's voice shouted again, "Radik?!.. Radik! Shit." There was shaking again as the camera moved to face a new soldier this one a Caucasian female with chocolate brown eyes in her early twenties wearing the same armor as Radik. Her face was set into a near snarl that cast a dangerous look over her fine features.

"This is Gunnery Sergeant Williams With the 212! We need immediate Evac." With that she dropped the camera and started barking orders. "Fall back! Fall back!" the shooting continued till it was a dull thudding in the background but the blue bolts only got closer as they persued their prey. Finally the enemy came into view of the cam. They weren't like anything John had ever seen before. They looked like Alliance assault Mech's but they had only three digits on each hand and they had heads that ended with flashlights.

It was a flawed military design that made John doubt his earlier assessment of this being a covenant assault. Surely the covenant weren't stupid enough to build their assault mechs with a target for a head? John had fought the Covenant before and he knew from firsthand experience that they could be stupid but surely they weren't that stupid.

But it was a question that would have to wait to be answered, for as several dozen of the mechs walked by one of them caught sight of the active camera and stalked over and stomped on it, very effectively ending the transmission. The screen went dark.

The room was silent for a moment until it was broken by Anderson.
"Joker-"

"Already done captain, nearest fleet is on it's way, their seventy-three minutes out."

"Then we still have to get in there and secure the Beacon." He narrowed his eyes. "Take us in joker, fast and quite."

"Aye, Captain."

John turned to Nihlus who had gone quite. When he saw him he looked blank, _it's hard to read a Turian's face._ Then he said something in

barely a whisper. "what are the Geth doing out here?"

This perked John's interest. "Is that what those things were?" John asked him, "The Geth?"

The Spectre looked up at him, surprised that he had been able to hear him, but nodded. "Yes, they are synthetic workers built by the Quarians almost six hundred years ago after they annexed them from their home systems behind the Perseus Veil. They're the reason for our laws against AI's. but no one has seen them since the Quarians left the Veil."

John looked at the ceiling to a moment then thought tiredly. _It just had to be worse than the Covenant, didn't it?_

"I'll be waiting in the Bay." John said as he turned and walked to the door. "This mission just got a _lot_ more complicatedâ€|"

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: Ships and vehiclesMilitary Ship
Classifications/Alliance**

The Systems Alliance Navy classifies their vessels into any one of 8 classes.

FIGHTERS: A small close assault single man or un-manned fighter craft. No larger than a few meters in length.

CORVETTES: Light small assault craft. Between 20-40 meters long. Primarily used to keep Fighters off larger vessels, to perform guerilla style raids against larger vessels, and for scouting and screening enemy ships. Often equipped with stealth equipment to allow for stealth raids. Normally operated in large wolf-pack flotillas in combination with Fighters or interceptors.

CRUISERS: Heavy Small assault craft. Between 80-180 meters long. Anti-ship/Anti-fighter vessels that operate in large wolf-pack Flotillas. The Primary patrol ship of the Alliance.

PROWLERS: Stealth reconnaissance Non-combat vessels. Cruisers built for intelligence gathering and communication.

DESTROYERS: Standard assault craft of the Alliance Navy. ~460 meters long. Heavily armed and armored and carries a small number of Fighters/interceptors. Operated in Wolf-pack flotillas.

HEAVY DESTROYERS: Heavy assault craft of the Alliance Navy. ~900 meters long. Heavily armed and armored. Usually leading Destroyer wolf-packs.

CARRIERS: heavily armored vessels that carry large numbers of fighters and soldiers. ~2 kilometers long.

DREADNOUGHTS: Super-Massive Capitol ships and the most powerful vessels in the Alliance Navy. Stretching over ten kilometers long operating as a Carrier and a Destroyer.

* * *

><p>Comments? Concerns? thought's about things you thought were stupid?

leave a review :)

alrighty, i know you guys are just dying to know what took me so long this time, but there really wasn't a whole lot to it. for the most part i was just lazy and I am really, **_Really**_** sorry for that, but then there was writers block for a few weeks, then there was the fact that i didn't like the first draft, then the second, then the third... you get the idea. then i came out with this one and i loved it. i hope you do to :D.**

I need to get these out faster. maybe some reviews would help me get some muse. but seriously, give me your thoughts about the story. i don't care about how weird the thought may be, just leave it. all i have to base my work off of is my own opinion and what i read in other people's stories. so give me something.

also... No longer the longest chapter but is now 8,416 words. Yeah! that was a lot of work. Wonder how many more will be this long?.

8. Part 2: Chapter 8: ZOMBIES!

Hello Again All! Sorry for messing with all your heads again with a repost of a chapter, but there were a few things that I noticed that weren't right in this one [like a wrong chapter number] that I needed to fix. if you see anything else let me know and I will do my best to fix them as soon as I am able... Thank you all! :D

I am back after my long absence with CHAPTER 8. I will admit that this took a wicked long time for me to get out to you, and I will admit fault for this one. there is no excuse. there I said it. and I am sorry for the long wait. but I do thank you for your ever-enduring patience with me. it really does mean a great deal to me. a very great deal. thank you. I love you guys. {:'-}

note that you codex for this chapter I credited to Dark Pheonix Jake for bringing up the marvelous idea of having comparative fleet codex's for both the Alliance and the Citadel Council fleets. thank you again DPJ for the grand idea.

Now to the NRBECE.

this chapter is longer than I wanted, and it did not actually cover the content that I had originally planned for it to cover. it went a great deal more in depth into character creation than I intended and I will admit that I feel that this is a good thing. it was just unexpected. so please, read, enjoy, or not... and let me know what you think.

oh, and side note. I am also updating chapter seven once again. I can not stand the way that the Codex for the Alliance fleet was written so I once again rewrote it. i really like the way it turned out this time though, so this time it should be for good.

**again, Thanks to all of you who bother to come around and read these far to slow in coming chapters. I really do appreciate all the

support and guidance as I strive to become a better (and faster) writer. Thank you all again.**

And now, Without further annoyance!

on with Chapter 8!

I DO NOT OWN ME OR ANYTHING OWNED BY THE COMPANY WHO SHALL NOT BE NAMED!

* * *

><p>"Our Legacy"

Part Two: A Traitor In Our Midst.

**Chapter 8: "ZOMBIES!" **

**Date: January 31, 2681 **

Time: 0940 hrs.

Location: USAS SR7-1 **_Normandy**_** en route to Eden Prime **

John stood, leaning against the starboard wall of the Hold with one foot propped back against the wall ignoring the transport pilot and almost a dozen marines and techies flitting about from place to place prepping their equipment and the Heron for the landing on Eden Prime. They needed to be at their best. The Entire planet was surrounded by a large fleet of ships that belonged to what has been revealed, by their Spectre guest, as the Geth which were, as the information in the Citadel Codex described them; A race of sentient machines built right around 600 years ago by the Quarians, who had intended to build a mechanical labor force. What had originally started as a good idea got a little mucked up when the mechs grew their own consciousness and decided that they didn't like working for the Quarians and booted them all out of their home systems and colonies, of which there were few. Makes sense now that the Citadel species were so freaked out by the prospect of a race who share their lives with Ai's.

John had never really been that curious as to why, he didn't really do a whole lot of work with the Citadel species but it did help him understand them a bit better than he had. Which would be really important in the years to come what with him possibly becoming a Spectre and all. But now that he had learned about it, it really made him wonder why the Geth would start a war in the first place. The argument that the anti AI associations made about them starting it because they were robots held absolutely no merit whatsoever. A robot won't just decide one day that it just wants to up and kill it's maker, AI brains didn't work like that, it took an organic mind to do that. And even then, most creatures, organic or not, usually won't shoot you without a good reason, key-word there being "Usually", but stillâ€¦. Yah, the story just didn't fit.

The Alliance has had AI's for a little over five hundred years and despite a few small spats here and there, they've always worked together for the common good of both. He wanted to know the hidden part of the story, but it could be very likely that the reason had been lost to history. But whatever he may want to know or do could be

put off for a few hours till he had this mess on Eden Prime straightened out.

He had been in the Hold for the last ten minutes waiting for their Captain to give them the Okay to head for the surface. But he hadn't heard anything since he left the Captain and Nihlus in the Briefing room. The only thing that could be holding him up was if he managed to get in touch with Arcturus. If that was the case, then he'd probably be a few more minutes. If not, he'll be showing up any time now.

John looked over to the elevator door and waited for a moment. Alright, he thought, he's probably on the comm then.

He heard the soft whine of the engines as the Heron came online then Kaiden's voice come on in over his comm line in group chat. "Listen up People," there was a momentary pause as he waited for and received the blinking green lights in affirmative before he went on. "Orders are in from the Captain. He won't be down in time to see us off so here's the rundown. We are taking the Heron down to a private space dock on the outskirts of Eden City where we are to retrieve a high priority package. Per the original plan it was supposed to be ready for shipment. As of right now we are assuming the package is still in the facility so our original orders are in effect until we know otherwise. Once we reach the ground we will be splitting into two teams. Red team, led by Spartan 9001, and Blue Team, led by Nihlus, our visiting Specter, once touch down we'll split up, find the package, then get it back to the Normandy asap. Finish up whatever you have left to do here and get on board. We leave as soon as the rest of the team arrives. " again there were blinking lights all around as they marked the affirmative and started finishing up their last minute preparation and started piling into the small dropship.

John had half a thought to go ahead and load himself in, but only for a moment. He was one of the three largest people on the ground team so it would probably be best if he waited to get in after the rest of the team arrived and loaded up.

He was currently going over a map of the dig area that had been acquired by a quick scan of the quadrants that had been provided to the Captain for pickup. He was assessing possible approach vectors and escape routes. Both of which there were few. The Geth were everywhere. From the Normandy's scans it looked as if there were thousands of them on the planet and they had over one hundred vessels in the air that were currently bombing cities and important areas, completely ignoring the burnt out husks of what was left of the planets defending fleet. This battle was not faring well for the peaceful utopian world.

A few moments later John saw the elevator doors open on the far side of the Hold revealing Nihlus and the last two marines. As they stepped off the elevator John shot a friendly nod to the Spectre, which the Turian returned as he moved toward the Heron. John joined him as the last of the marines piled onto the vessel.

"Looking forward to our first mission?" Nihlus asked. His tone sounded friendly enough but it was hard to tell with the strange flanging in his voice that was unique to his species.

John decided to take it as friendly. So he shrugged and replied, "Actually, I really haven't made up my mind about the yetâ€" he turned his head to the Turian then added, "In all truth it will really depend on what sort of advancements the Geth have made in the last six hundred yearsâ€" You?"

"Same." Nihlus replied as they climbed into the back of the dropship and took their seats opposite each other as the door sealed behind them.

"If they have managed to advance as far as your species have, then we may find ourselves with a very dangerous problem."

"They're not that advanced." John, said grabbing Nihlus' attention

"How do you know that?"

"The scans." Shepard explained. "The remains in orbit have showed that there are over 60 ships that were not alliance vessels. If I had to guess I'd say that the Geth showed up with well over a hundred and fifty ships. As it is, they lost over sixty of them in the orbital assault. And they outnumbered our ships nearly five to one. If anything, they are only slightly ahead of your species' own technology levels."

The look that the Spectre sent his way was a curious one and from it John figured that the Spectre hadn't been informed of the information.

"Sorry," he began, "I went straight to the officers in control before coming down here." He explained. "They let me look at the results of the first scans. There are perks to being a Spartan"

"I thought you said they set up â€" Comm Net, over the planet, does that not block scanning?"

The Spartan shook his head in answer, "No, a comm net just blocks communication, there are ways to stop a scan but they are not quite as common as a communications block."

The stare this time was filled with incredulity. "your species is incredible, I truly cannot imagine what will come of our civilizations becoming allies."

"Our governments haven't agreed to that yet"

A look came upon the turian's face again, and John was certain that it was a smile. "Ahh, but with us working together they soon will."

John smiled inside his helmet as he shook his head in light amusement as they lapsed into a companionable silence. That was made a little too intimate by the closeness of the people in the Herons passenger bay. The Heron was small. Being barely 9 meters long, 3 meters high, and five wide, it was barely half the size of a full sized Pelican, but the Heron series dropships were built for one thing that the Pelican wasn't, Stealth. It was built specifically to carry a small team of soldiers into enemy territory and get them back out in one piece. It's small compact size was one of the prime contributors to

its stealth, as well as the only reason that the Normandy had a dropship. Any other model would have been too large for the Medium Cruiser.

John looked around the small hold within the Heron considering that under normal circumstances it should be able to carry a team of twelve Human Marines comfortably but with the people in their own group of eleven they filled the small ship to a near uncomfortable level. Of the Marines aboard the Normandy there were three Kig-Yar, a Sangheilli, three Humans, and an Unggoy. The three Kig-Yar, Turc, Mokna, Dreal, and the Unggoy, Kevvek, were, as expected, smaller than the average Human. Linda and Jenkins, the smaller Human Marines, were both of average height. It was the Sangheilli, the massive Human, and himself that took up the most room in the craft. The Sangheilli, Daniel, stood just over 6" 10' tall, and while that was a bit under the average for sangheilli, that was very large for a Human. And Garin, the massive Human stood just over 6'7". With them in the mix the twelve man seating space seemed far too small for their eleven man team.

John found it humorous.

The silence stretched for a few short minutes that were filled with the hum of the Heron's dual fusion engines and the rumbling of atmospheric interference as the small ship passed deeper the planet's atmosphere.

Since he knew that there was nothing more that he could do to further prepare himself for the encounters to come on the ground, John laid his head back and closed his eyes paying attention only to the humming of the fusion engines. He focused on calming the thundering memories in his mind's eye. It was usually right around this time that he started remembering past moments, a whole lot of them had started out just like this. A couple squads leaving on a top secret mission. And they all usually ended the same way, too. Messily... But he didn't want to think about those things right now.

John breathed deep and banished the thoughts to the furthest part of his mind and focused on the humming. And it was as it always had been to him—soothing. He would build, or in the usual case for him burn, those other bridges when he got to them. Right now there was no reason to sour a pleasant ride in this overstuffed sardine can with memories of long dead friends and lovers.

He didn't know how long it had been but his calm was eventually interrupted by a beep from his comm unit. John checked the tag and found it to be from the Normandy Bridge, flagged high priority

“That was fast”—He got changes to orders all the time, just usually those were given after he hit the ground. He keyed an encryption before accepting the call.

Taking on his Official tone he answered, "Spartan 9001 Copy Normandy.

"Hold tight, 1," a friendly female voice spoke over the comm, one of the communication officers. "I've got an urgent communique from the Captain. Patching you through now."

It took only a moment before he heard Anderson's serious voice over

the link.

"Spartan, we have a serious problem.". Sounded like he had gotten more bad news.

"I figured that from the flag sir, what's wrong."

"A lot of things Spartan, a whole hell of a lot." Anderson replied seriously, "Long story short, this planet along with any other planets that are regularly visited by Citadel Tourists are AI free zones. But when we found the Prothean ruins on the Eden prime we moved in an AI in to handle the brain work of the dig. Turns out that the installation where the A.I. is located came under direct assault shortly after the planet came under attack." He just let that stew for a few moments before continuing. "I cannot express the importance of making sure that the Council does not stumble upon the knowledge that we went against out arrangement. If they were to find out about this it could set us back years in peaceful negotiation."

Oooh, that is bad. "So, in a nutshell; find the AI, and get it back to the ship without anyone noticing."

"Correct, I sent the last known coordinates of the AI to your PC."

"Understood."

With that Anderson cut the call. With the call over John checked the location of the A.I. with his GPS.

They were just three Kilometers from the AI's position.

Better hop off while we're still close. He thought then he keyed his comm and asked aloud, to the Pilot, "Donii, how far are we from the ground?"

The Sangheilli woman's reply wasn't as quick as he would have liked and when she spoke it was with a very notable level of curiosity. "about thirty metersâ€¦ Why?"

Perfect. "stop the Heron and hold it steady."

The whole team had a few questions when the Heron that had been traveling at almost 250 miles an hour shuddered to a near sudden stop.

As the ship came to halt and hovered John turned to Nihlus. "Sorry for the hasty retreat, but I've got a situation that needs to be taken care of."

Nihlus nodded in understanding, "If anyone understands hasty retreats it's me. See you on the ground Spartan."

John tuned in his comm to group chat and looked at the rest of the team, "I have something that needs to be taken care of not far from here, until I meet up with you back at the drop sight Lieutenant Alenko will be taking charge of red team."

A round of green lights blinked in acknowledgement. "Donii, open the door."

"Spartan, I can't land here! There is a squad of mechs directly below us. If I get any closer they could detect us."

"I don't need you to land, just open the door."

There was once again a momentary pause then there was a click and hissing of mechanical gears working to open the door of the Heron. When it had opened all the way John gave a thumbs up to the team behind him and jumped into open air as he engaged his cloaking field, before he had fallen out of view he had already vanished into thin air.

* * *

><p>Geth runtimes1,999,673,941-1,999,673,962 checked their assigned quadrant of the clearing with a precision that was perfection. That was the Geth, they were perfection. And their God had given them a mission. Keep everything away from the beacon until their Prophet could finish his collection of it's memories. And so far they had succeeded.<p>

But that could change at any moment.

Just a few moments before, they had detected an anomaly in this exact area. They had been swarming over the planet for the last several hours and had yet to run into anything that "felt" like this thing. So it was only logical to assume that it was a threat. After consensus the rest of the Platoon agreed. So the dozen platforms in ,941-,962's squad had taken it upon themselves to find it.

Currently they were checking the clearing the anomaly had appeared in. But there was nothing here besides a few small trees and a dust cloud. How it got there none of the programs could answer because there have been no winds that could have picked up this much dust and threw it into the air. It was a strange occurrence that the squad could not reach consensus on, so they let the mystery be.

Because of the attendance of the Runtimes in the Destroyer platform that had taken place in the clearings center the search had taken no more than five seconds. at the end of sixth, Runtimes ,941-,962 had turned with the rest of the unit to return to their patrol, but as they turned and took sight of the Destroyer platform an unusual event took place that none of the now weighted intelligences of the Runtimes knew how to explain.

The Destroyer that had been standing in the center of the clearing had begun to turn, but as it did so it was reduced to a crushed mass of sparking wires and scrap metal. It looked as if a massive weight had been dropped on it from above. But there was nothing there.

The platoon shared their individual perceptions and knowledge of the event with each other in attempt to build a consensus on what action was best to take with the loss of their Destroyer. They had gotten halfway through a consensus before another two blinked out of existence with the unexplainable rupturing of their processing cores. The remaining runtimes concluded that the ruptures seemed as if there was an enemy within the area that had opened fire on them with a powerful anti armor weapon, but again, there was nothing in the clearing besides the nine platforms. After another split second of

consensus one of the remaining runtimes realized what was happening.

Cloaked threat! It revealed to the others right before it and the one standing beside it joined the dead ones as their cores exploded in an explosion of sparks.

Despite the loss of units providing additional power to their Under-Mind-Network, the remaining seven Platforms reacted to the news quickly. In a fraction of a second they had run through every sensory option in their short list in tangent. And In a too long .25 seconds in which they lost another two of their platoon, they finally could see the threat. But see, in this sense was only a relative term. Because the thingâ€¦ whatever it was, had somehow shifted itself out of the known visible spectrums and was revealed to the platforms sensors as little more than a pitch black shadowy mass as their sensors attempted to bounce high resolution rays of light, sound, and microwaves off of the target and build an appropriate visual of it's body with five different forms of detection equipment.

The thing stood upright and was large, as large as a Prime. But they could discern no shape from the shadow. In the time it took for the runtimes to process the information that they were under attack by the massive invisible thing. Two more of their number had joined the dead. In the time it took the remaining ones to raise their arms and fire, two more had been destroyed.

The rounds fired from the last remaining three platforms seemed to have no effect on the creature as a barrier shimmered around the creature as it returned to the normal visible spectrum and activated a shield in turn for it's cloaking field. It was a _Human_, a very large armor plated _Human_. The barrier absorbed the impact and energy of the rounds without any trouble.

Runtime 1,999,673,941 and his ilk realized quickly that standard ammunition would not do enough damage against the creature to hinder it so they quickly switched to an over charged plasma blast from their blaster arm. The moment it raised it's arm to fire on the creature it felt a massive force against it's core as the metal armor casing burst against the force of an amazingly powerful round that tore through it's chest cavity. When it hit the ground it realized it wasn't dead and needed to relay the new enemy information back to it's Prime. But the round that destroyed most of the Platform's chest had also destroyed it's transmitting equipment. There would be no information going to the Primes from this patrol team.

A few seconds later, the _Human_ came into view of the platform and pressed a large booted foot on the platforms chest and crushed it. Without another thought, Runtime 1,999,673,941 and the rest of the minds in the platform ceased to be.

* * *

><p>Shepard's eyes roved the clearing taking in any possible threat, but after a moment of scanning he deduced that all the Mechs in the area had been neutralized.<p>

That was surprisingly easy. He thought as he holstered his smoking pistols, considering the quickness in which he had dispatched the dozen Geth units. He attributed the easy win with the element of

surprise and a very hefty sum of providence. How else could he explain the chances of the biggest mech standing right below where he landed? But he also knew that it would not be that easy again.

Mechs learn quickly. Especially when they were as intelligent as these mechs seem to be. They located him only a little over a second after he had landed. **That** was very impressive. But he still had to take into account that they were in fact machines, so it wasn't **that** impressive. But it was very impressive. Practically smart A.I level.

If they are this efficient it really does make one wonder what the flashlights are for. He looked around the clearing once more, this time scanning over the dead mechs and taking in the fact that when he had fallen, the lights were on, after he shot them, the lights went outâ€| well, all except the one that survived his initial onslaughtâ€| Aha, they do serve me a purpose. When they 'died', their light went out. That would prove to be quite a useful bit of knowledgeâ€| as well as a rather corny analogy.

He looked up to where he knew the Heron had been moments before and could make out nothing but a barely visible ion trail of its thrusters, it was already gone. It was a handy little vessel. It had very little in the way of offense. Just two chain guns. But it's stealth ability made it completely invaluable in for getting in and out of a dangerous area without being detected. To bad it wasn't as advanced as the Normandy's stealth systems though.

According to what he had read and what the Chief Engineer had told him the Normandy would be completely undetectable to over ninety percent of the entire Alliance navy as well as being outfitted with offensive and defensive systems that seemed more at home on a standard destroyer. The only ships with the technology to detect it would be a Prowler or a Dreadnaught and it could very likely take on a ship that was well over three times its size. It was the ultimate Cruiser.

He had to remember to look into the tech when he returned to the ship. For a Spartan who constantly found himself in situations where he had to build his own way out of a dangerous situation there was definitely a lot to learn from this.

With the adoration of the ships out of the way he turned to the mechs on the ground to get a better look at what he would be facing during his stay on Eden Prime. Besides the actual shape of the machine, it's basic design looked very similar to that of the Alliance's combat mechs. It was humanoid in structure with two arms and two legs and it even had a weapon for it's left arm. As a matter of fact. The only things he could actually say that these, Geth, and the Combat mechs didn't share were their heads which looked like an eel coming up from between their shoulders and the fact that on it's right hand and both feet it had only three digits.

After taking a few moments to make sure they were all dead, he checked his heading on the HUD. After ensuring he was pointing in the right direction he started off toward the 212's last known position, about 12 Kilometers from the dig sight.

He grimaced as he thought of what this simple pick-up jaunt had turned into. There was a full blown war going on right now with a

race that has, up till now, been hiding for the past six centuries. That was a major problem added to an already horrific situation. The last thing ****anyone**** needed right now was another enemy. But that is what they had. All they could do now was try to make the best of a very messy situation.

The coordinates that Joker and Dona had managed to acquire from the short transmission from the planet's surface was the last known location of Marine platoon 212 one of two platoons stationed on the planet to protect the Archeological find of the decade, The Prothean Beacon that had been buried for only God knows how long.

The easiest way to find them would be to track the Soldiers of the 212. According to the transmission, the commanding officer had begun a retreat to the Barracks. With any luck, a few of them had made it and they would be holding it and waiting for reinforcements. Or, in the event of being overrun, they would be destroying anything that could provide the enemy forces with important military intelligence.

And without any luckâ€¦ wellâ€¦ at least he'd be able to pry the information from the Sergeant's implants if necessary.

He shivered internally, thinking about the possibility of needing to dig around inside someone's head for a chip the size of a dime.

Better not to think about that unless it becomes necessary.

Since he knew that he would only be here for a couple hours at best he knew he didn't have to worry about conserving too much energy for a long engagement. So he zipped off at a breakneck run that left the scenery flying past him in a flurry of spring colors. It was practically spring here all year round. After a little over a couple minutes of jumping boulders and leaping through underbrush with an agility and silence that would have made a panther from the forests of earth jealous he spotted the first marks of battle.

He cleared the forest line and entered a clearing that a dirt road passed through that was easily as wide as a football stadium with only a few large boulders and a few sparse clumps of trees. But what drew Sheperd's attention were the scorch marks that covered everything. He walked up to one of the marks and examined it closely, it wasn't a scorch mark, it was a small hole burnt into the side of a boulder.

No, not burntâ€¦ Melted? He scanned it with a quick wave of his left hand and let his PC digest it while he looked over the battle scene. It was a burnt mess, but besides the dozen bullet ridden husks of the mechs and even the places on the ground where a body had fallen in death, but there were no bodies. there was nothing here. Throughout the entire clearing he could see the boot prints of Alliance soldiers all over the area, all heading in the same direction. That would make their movements easy to follow. A blind man could follow these tracks. But there were no dead organicsâ€¦_ where are the bodies at?_

Before he went off in search of the lost marines he decided to take a head count of what he would be running into when he caught up. It was not good. There was easily a full companies worth of these things

still alive and hunting the Marines that had survived the first attack, from the marks on the ground, he guessed that the Marines now numbered around a dozen alive from a platoon of around forty Marines. Twelve versus a hundred and eighty

Not good he thought to himself. Then looked over to the fallen mechs scattered around the clearing. His eyes fell upon a mech that was differently designed from the others. This one had hands on both arms, no blaster arm, and it was big. Bigger than he was and it was red with a large antennae coming off its back. The weapon it was carrying looked a lot like a large, if short, heavy assault rifle. If he had to choose a word to describe it he'd say it was beautiful much like the machine's own design, all soft curves and slim casings all colored a bluish purple very similar to the Covenant's favorite color. After another quick scan he deduced that it was, in fact an energy weapon that fired a much more stable formula than the Covenant's plasma weapons use. And it would not blow up if he touched it. Experimentally he plucked up the Rifle and hefted it in his hands.

It was heavy, heavier than his own rifle and it looked fairly durable. After a few moments of examining the weapon he placed it on his back and started off at a run, following the Alliance Soldiers tracks.

Never hurts to have an extra weapon.

* * *

><p>Come on Ash, the young Brunette thought to herself, trying to catch her breath and keep from hyperventilating as she ran through the Geth infested forest surrounding her. Don't stop breathing, don't stop breathing! Oh, God! Don't let me stop breathing.

This was one of many prayers she had made over the last several hours. Since the attack began she had been running and shooting constantly. And every minute of it had brought with it a dead friend. It was becoming hard for her to distance herself like the training she received in the academy demanded. In those short two and a half hours she had seen things that she would never forget, lest forgive. Her Colonel was lost in the first wave from a plasma cannon that looked like it had come straight from the Covenant/ Human War and the Geth were even more relentless. His death had left her in charge of the platoon, at least, what was left of it.

And what a great job you've done, Sergeant Williams, she berated herself as a few more tears slid out her eyes. And for what, for some stupid A.I. that wasn't even supposed to be here.

Stupid Brass, always playing around with rules and people's lives as if they didn't matter. Her thoughts were interrupted as she heard a few of their drones close in on her and open fire with their rapid-fire weapons. She dodged to her left and made a break for a clearing she could see through the trees. She made her way to the clearing quickly, making erratic zigzag motions to evade the rounds that tore into the ground at her feet and flew by her to strike trees or thin air. But all their shots were off. She watched her motions tracker for them to be sure that they were close enough for her not to miss.

_Please, God, let this work. _Once they were within a dozen meters she spun and opened fire with her rifle on full auto. The momentum that she had been running at carried her to the ground on her back but the three drones following her burst into pieces under the heavy attack of her assault rifle. After dispatching them she just lay there nearly coughing as she tried to get her breath back.

She was in excellent physical condition. She knew this, but the constant action and emotional extremes over the past two and a half hours had gotten to her two miles ago when she had started the run for the Dig sight. She knew that the other platoon had been stationed there and would probably still be there holding it for evacuation. So if she wanted to get out of this alive, she would need to head there.

Only problem with that was the seemingly endless horde of Machines that bared the way. These Geth were relentless and when they started moving they didn't stop until they achieved their objective. And it looked as though their objective right now was to catch Ashley and commandeer the A.I. core that was currently plugged into a mobile hard drive that was clamped to her belt.

_How had they even known about it, _most of the soldiers didn't even know that there was an A.I here. So how had the Frikkinn Mechs learned of it?

She took a few moments to gather herself before standing back up and starting off again at a steady run. She had to get back to the dig and get this A.I. to safety. There was absolutely no way that she was going to let these horrible robots succeed in what all of her friends had died to stop.

Three more times she was overtaken by drones and each time she managed to take them out the same way the first three had been dispatched.

She ran continuously through the brush and undergrowth, doing her best to stay ahead of the Geth horde behind her and she managed to do just that.

She followed her compass readings for another kilometer till she ran into another clearing on. But once she cleared the trees she stopped dead. Off to one side was a crashed hover car that looked like it had been brought down by weapons fire. Beyond the crash there were a half dozen geth carrying a human man from the crash to a placement of three strange tripods. She had no idea what they were, but if the Geth were carrying people to them then they couldn't be good.

She watched, trying to figure out what they were doing. Two of the machines held a young man with brown hair, maybe 25 years old, over one of the tripods, she noticed then that the man was still breathing. He groaned and lifted his head to look at the mechs and his green eyes widened in horror but didn't manage to say a word. The moment he was fully suspended over the pod the leftmost mech hit a control on the side of the device and with a mechanical groan a spike grew from its beveled top and impaled the man and lifted his dying corpse eight feet into the air.

Oh My GOD! Ashley thought with a gasp and nearly hurled as she hit

the ground from shock. She stifled the noise and looked up to see if she was noticed.

Shitâ€¦ she was.

The Geth with Mechanical precision moved toward her position and opened fire. She fired at them blindly and ran for her life. She was in no condition to take on a half dozen of these things, especially in an open environment. Her only hope was to get into the trees and outrun them.

But she was out of breath and exhausted from the long run from the Barracks, how could she manage to outrun a team of mechanical soldiers that ran faster than a man. Yah, she was gonna die if she didn't think of something soon.

She ran through the trees ducking a dodging, giving the synthetics as difficult a target to hit as possible while trying to figure out how to get out of this mess. Her mind came up blank as several rounds torn into her shields.

Oh, God, please help me. She prayed as she dived out of the way as a slew of round tore past where her head had been a moment before. She came up and sent her view ahead of her looking for a way to escape. And she found it. To her left there was a sort of valley that was lined with thick trees and bushes and down a ways she could see a very large tree had fallen down and blocked the path she remembered it from several weeks ago when her squad had found it on patrol. She remembered that between it and the ground there was a hole that looked like she could fit through it. But if she went down that way and her memory was wrong, the Geth would catch her and kill her, or take her back to the spikes. But she couldn't keep ahead of them for much longer. She was reaching the edge of her stamina and she knew it.

She made a rapid decision and quickly shot to her left and raced for the downed tree. The mechs followed closely behind and steadily got closer, firing all the while. As she drew closer to the fallen tree she saw it. When the tree had fallen it must have landed on one of its limbs because where it should have been laying on the ground there was a gap between the tree and the ground. Just barely a full foot of space. Just enough for her to fit through if she dived into it. Her shield took several more hits.

With her hope renewed and desperation clawing at her heart she pumped her arms and legs to gain more speed. She made it less than ten feet away before her shield failed her and she felt a fierce burning on the back of her left calf, she screamed as the burning became a searing pain that caused her leg to collapse when she next tried to step. But mid-fall she turned her fall into a dive and slid into the gap just as several rounds hit the bark above her head. The next moment she was through and she was airborne.

What?... oh, yah, there was a cliff back here wasn't there?

That was about all that she managed to think before gravity pulled her into a shallow dive that she knew ended with her hitting the ground nearly forty feet below her with the force of a hovercar hitting a cat at thirty miles per hour. In other words, it was going to hurt, if not, kill her.

She screamed. She tried to grab onto a few branches that she passed on her way down but couldn't reach them. It was only moments before she hit the ground that she noticed that someone was racing for her falling form. It was a large man in thick heavy assault armor who was missing a helmet. And he was moving fast. Very fast.

Before she hit the ground the man had closed the distance, leapt into the air and caught her then landed rather gracefully for such a large man, efficiently ending her potentially lethal fall. Once on the ground his momentum carried him to a copse of large boulders. There he set Williams down and turned to engage something that Ashley couldn't see. Weapons fire erupted beyond her vision as the man started shooting. She took the moment to examine her leg and cried out softly when she saw the wound. Whatever they had hit her with had melted straight through the armor on her leg and had burned into her calf it was deep and it hurt terribly. So it wasn't a third degree burn. That was good at least. With a glance she checked her Medigel supply and groaned. She was out. She heard the gunfire stop and she gasped and shrunk inwardly as she heard something move toward her. She grasped her pistol, her rifle had fallen out of her grip while she fell and was on the ground somewhere out there. As she heard the footsteps come closer she prayed that it was the human and not more Geth.

"We're clear." A deep male voice, not at all unpleasant, called from out of view, "I'm coming around so don't shoot."

Ashley took a moment to realize that it was a human that just called out and she sighed thankfully as she lowered her weapon as the large man came around. She looked up at her rescuer as he came around the boulders into her view.

He was big. Easily standing over seven feet tall, and if the form of his armor was anything to judge by, he was powerfully built and he wore more weapons than her entire squad had together when this infernal war had begun. His face looked as if it was chiseled from granite with strong handsome features that seemed hardened by two scars, one small one right above his right brow and the other a large white scar that stretched from just over the left edge of his mouth to just under his ear. He was clean shaven and had close cropped jet black hair and piercing blue eyes that seemed to stare right through Ashley, as though he could look right into her mind and divine what she were thinking anytime he wished. Almost entrancing she shook her head to clear out any of those thoughts and looked up when the man next addressed her with a smile.

"Sergeant Williams." He said with a light smile, "Spartan 9-0-0-1 is Good to see you're still with the living."

"Oh my God." Ashley's eyes widened when he introduced himself. "I was just saved by a Spartan." She was ecstatic, but her joy was short lived as the bitter reality of her situation descended on her and her eyes dimmed as she remembered all the people that had died in the last two hours. "Yah," she said not very convincingly. "It's good to be here," then she grimaced as the pain came back.

"You're injured." It was a statement and Ashley could say nothing as the Spartan crouched down next to her and looked over the wound.

"Heck of a burn you got there." he said lightly, "medigel?"

She rolled her eyes, "If I had any left I'd have used it." Her voice was more acidic than she intended, but he didn't seem offended,

"Of course you would have. My apologies."

Oh, God. This guy just saved my life and he's offering medical treatment and he's apologizing because I attacked him for it. She cringed inside and was about to offer an apology but he put up a hand.

"Don't sweat it, you're in a very stressful situation right now and I reckon you've lost a great deal of friends today. There is no need for apology."

She almost cried, she ****had**** lost a great many friends today. Too manyâ€|

"Thanks," was all she could bring herself to say as the Spartan applied a tube of Medi-Gel he had removed from a hidden compartment on his leg to her burn.

"Don't mention it." Was his only reply. In moments he was finished with applying the cool clear reconstructive mush and he sat down next to her and hefted a heavy Human rifle looked like a variant of the Revenant, possibly a HAR-80-M3â€| a very powerful weapon. "let's give that a few minutes to seal up then we'll get moving."

She gave him a cursory once over and spotted the Spartan insignia on his shoulder. So at least she knew he was a Spartan. But it looked scorched. As a matter of fact, his entire suit looked as if he had just walked through a bomb strike. She wanted to ask why, but it seemed pretty apparent. He'd been in a fighting, and a big one, by the looks of his armor, but where was his helmet at? She would have asked but she had another question that seemed more important to her at the moment, and though she knew that where they were going to should have been self-explanatory, but like he had said, she was really stressed out right now, so any stupid questions would probably be allowed at least this once.

"Where are you going?"

He sent a look over to her that seemed a little probing but he answered, "to the dig sight, the rest of my team is there securing it."

_Oh. _She thought,_ his team must be the one coming for the artifact_. "You're here for the beacon?"

He looked at her again. Again probing, but didn't say anything. "The Prothean Beacon that we found while extending the Monorail." She clarified.

"So, you know about the Beacon?"

She felt a little perturbed by the questioning, but she guessed that he had to be sure that she was for real. "All the soldiers from the 212 did. We were assigned to patrol the area surrounding it to make

sure no one accidentally discovered the Alliance's little secret."

The answer seemed to satisfy him, "mhm. Having a little trouble finding it right now, but yah, that's why I'm here."

"Right, your helmets missing." _God, that was so obvious._

Didn't seem like he minded "Yah, I got hit while my shield was down by some chemical weapon back at the Barracks. I was fortunate to get it off before it ate through." He grunted in derision. "Too close if you ask me."

"No kiddingâ€¦ well I'm glad you got it off. If you hadn't I don't think I'd be breathing right now." Ashley sighed waiting for the pain to subside was agonizing.

"Don't sell yourself short Sergeant; I saw the handy work of your escape into the forest. You'd have found a way out of this situation. Of that I am sure."

Then how wasn't I able to save any of them? She thought darkly as her memories swam with the losses over the last few hours, _why couldn't I save them?_ She cinched her eyes shut to keep herself from crying

"Don't do that."

Her eyes snapped open as the Spartan interrupted her from her reverie. "Do what?" she asked as calmly as she could, but she noticed her voice cracked slightly.

"Blame yourself," he said explained, "it wasn't your fault."

"But,"

"No" he refuted, "It wasn't." his tone left no room for argument. "Since I've been on the ground I've almost died four times. And each of those times I've managed to barely survive and that was only since a half hour ago."

She gasped slightly at his tone. She hadn't thought about that. His armor had been burnt up pretty bad, but he was a Spartanâ€¦ They didn't die, they were practically invincible.

"You managed to survive throughout all this with only basic military tech. That shows you are an incredible soldier, easily one of the finest I've ever met. You did your best." He spoke with sincerity. "No one could have asked for more."

She looked up into his eyes to see, she had to know if he was being sincere. She felt like a little girl who had just done something terrible and didn't know what to do next. She had to know that she couldn't have done any better. And his eyes, those deep piercing ice blue eyes told her, that he was right.

"If you need to be mad at someone for your friends deaths then blame the Geth, it was the Geth that killed them, not any inaction on your part."

Ashley's arguments died on her tongue, she didn't have the heart to argue the point. One of her childhood hero's had just refuted every argument that she had and he said it wasn't her fault, and while she may never grow to fully believe him. Right now she could believe that he knew what he was saying. She inhaled deeply and sighed loud, "Alright. I get it." She checked her leg and found she could stand on it. So she stood and walked over to her fallen assault rifle and snatched it from the ground.

She looked to the Spartan who threw her a fresh clip. With a single fluid movement she ejected the old block, slid the new one into it's place, and activated the weapon. She looked at the Spartan and hefted her rifle.

"Time for some payback." She stood there for a moment waiting for an order.

"Wellâ€¦ What are you waiting for?"

She was confused by the question till he pointed to his helmetless head. "No HUD, you've got point."

She smiled awkwardly and not just a little shyly. "sorry," she checked her compass and pointed in the direction they needed to go.

"Four clicks due Southeast of here."

The Spartan motioned her ahead, "Lead the way Sergeant."

"Aye, Spartan."

And together they were off.

The way was flooded with Geth patrols, dozens of them, and each one had between six to a dozen units each. Despite the danger and near exhausting constant action, Ashley found herself in awe of what the Spartan was doing to the machines. She may have been well trained and managed to drop a few of them, but the Spartan was everything that she had read about in those Sci/Fi novels she had loved reading and hearing about since she was a young child. With movements that seemed equal parts exotic dancer and barbarian warlord, he ruthlessly dispatched anything that got into his way.

It was beautiful in a deadly and terrifying sort of way. Almost like the dance of some deadly venomous snake. And she more than once sent a silent prayer of thanks upward that the massive man had come along when he did. Despite his warm words, she knew she would never have made it to the dig sight without his help.

As they made their way steadily toward the dig sight, the minutes seemed to stretch into hours. Ashley knew it was just the fighting that stretched the time but it felt like an eternity before they made it to the first dig area that was at the bottom of a large trench that had been dug recently to locate the Prothean artifacts. The entire area had been roped off then was divided into 3X3 foot sections in a grid pattern. She had been here just yesterday and it had been full of happy people. Scientists and archeologists the lot of them. But now there was no one to be seen. Though she knew it was

probably to late Ashley sent a silent prayer for their safety.

The sight looked clear though. There were no Geth around and there was no Beacon.

"This is where they found it." She said as they neared a large metal plate in the ground.

"It was just sitting there, as if it had been just waiting for someone to trip over it."

"Where is it now?"

"Until about a week ago they had it up to the primary pavilion for 'research'. But they moved it to a warehouse near the docks twenty miles north of here."

"Hm, I assume then that there was a reason that you took us three miles out of the way?"

She pointed toward the west, "The Monorail runs right past it. The nearest dock is right on the other side of that hill."

The Spartan looked pleased. "Good thinking, Sergeant. That will certainly speed us along our way."

Ashley beamed inside at the compliment. If she wasn't so tired she would have whooped for joy. But as it was she just settled for an ear splitting grin.

Her grin fell when they crested the top of the hill.

"looks like they hit the campâ€¦ hard."

The entire camp was a smoking ruin. Of all ten building that had once stood in a circle, only two remained upright. And one of those was on fire. It was a mess, there were Geth bodies lying around, but there weren't any humans. Seems that the geth had dragged them away again. _but where are they taking them?_

Ashley's question was answered a moment later when the Spartan tapped her shoulder, she looked at him and he pointed. She followed his finger and gasped at the grisly sight that met her eyes. Off to one side of the camp, hidden behind one of the burning husks of a shelter were those spikes that Ashley had seen the Geth impale the young man on. most of them had a human, suspended high in the air, impaled on their spikes.

"Fifteen of them in all if I'm counting right." He said aloud. "How many were here?"

"Twenty-twoâ€¦" she said pitifully "there were twenty-two archeologists and scientists here working at the dig. All of them were good people."

He stayed quite for a moment then said, "Split up and search for survivors. Hopefully we'll find the other seven. If you see them, call out."

Ashley nodded and moved toward the buildings. She noticed the Spartan

turn and walk toward the spikes. She figured he was trying to figure out what they were for. She was thankful that he had sent her to look for the missing people though. The longer she didn't have to look at the bodies the better.

She went about the work of searching the mess for survivors but didn't have a lot of hope in finding them, until she raised her eyes and saw the yet still sealed shelter on the far side of the camp. It was behind several others and was used as a storage room for whatever the Archeologists had found until they had them transferred to the warehouse for study. It was still solid and the lock on the door was activated. There were burn marks on the building but it looked like it was still sealed.

Yes! Thank you God! Someone did survive this. She rushed for the door but tripped when something twisted around her ankle. The sudden fall disoriented her but it took her only a second to get her wits back, that was when she noticed that whatever tripped her up had moved up her leg and was now clenched around her calf.

She twisted around onto her back and looked down.

Later she would look back on this day and curse her weakened state of mind that had caused her to. But she screamed; loud and high as a high school cheerleader that had just found a snake in her dresser as she lifted her rifle and held down the trigger. For ten long seconds she screamed and fired blindly because she had closed her eyes. Refusing to believe what they had just shown her. After she ran out of breath she opened her eyes to see what remained of the creature that had grabbed ahold of her leg. It was an arm. A severed human arm. And not just any human arm either. This one was black and skinny, like it was only skin and bone. And it was covered in glowing blue veins that pulsed eerily against the darkness of the collapsed shelter the thing had crawled from underneath of. Stretching into the shadows was a trail of glowing blue goo that ended in blackness of shadow. In the shadow she heard a groan. And out crawled the owner of the arm. It was covered in coal black skin glued to bone covered from head to toe in those glowing blue veins. Half it's head was missing and it had been riddled with so many holes that you couldn't even use it as a strainer. But it crawled toward her with a malice in it's empty black eyes that didn't belong among the living. And it was followed by two others.

She had only one word to describe such creatures, but those weren't real. But despite that solid fact that she was still adamant on believing she heard herself screaming it as she pulled on and held the trigger. "ZOMBIES!"

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: Ships and vehiclesMilitary Ship
Classifications/Citadel Council Navies**

The Citadel Council navies generally class their vessels into 6 different classes.

Fighters/Interceptors: A small close assault single man or un-manned fighter craft. No larger than a few meters in length.

****FRIGATES:** Light-weight assault craft; Small, fast ships used for scouting and screening larger vessels. Frigates often operate in wolf-pack flotillas. Length â€" shorter than 100 meters.**

****CRUISERS:** Middle-weight assault craft; More heavily armed and armored than Frigates. Cruisers are the standard patrol unit for the Citadel Navies and often lead Frigate flotillas. Length â€" average 150 meters.**

****HEAVY CRUISERS:** Heavy-weight assault craft; The backbone of the Citadel Council Navies. Heavily armed and armored and geared for long-duration heavy engagements. Length â€" average 260 meters.**

****DREADNAUGHTS:** Kilometer-long Capital ships mounting heavy, long-range firepower. As these massive vessels are expensive and hard to construct they are only deployed on the most important missions and are usually used as planetary defense platforms.**

****CARRIERS:** A recent addition to the Citadel Fleets, the Carriers were brought into production soon after the First contact war of 2657 after the realization of the incredible lethality of the Alliance super-massive CARRIERS and DREADNAUGHTS. These kilometer long vessels carry legions of fighters/interceptors into an engagement and provide light fire support. They are kept out of the primary engagement as they are little more than a large hanger with an engine.**

* * *

><p>WOW; this chapter now has 9,321 words. that is awesome! And is No longer the longest chapter to date...

****:**Like I noted in the NRBE******

****I** did not plan in having a heavy emphasis on Ashley in this chapter, it just sort of happened. and i want to know if i managed to capture the Strong young Woman Marine character that I saw her as.**

****And** before you say "You made her scream, i hate you." take into account that i base a lot of what i write on how i think i would handle a similar situation. i don't know about normal people, because every one has a different view on that, but if I had just had a Zombie snag my Leg I would of went freaking Crazy. I am dead serious here. I would have totally gone Umpa Lumpa on that MoeFoe and lost all sense of reality.**

****but** i digress. if you think i totally crashed and burned, let me know how so I can fix it in later chapters, if not. let me know how i succeeded so i can continue to be awesome and gain much fame :D**

****and** once again, you have my thanks for reading.**

****and** again! (Last time, I swear)**

****in** regards to chapter seven's codex.**

****There** were some flaws that were not well thought out with the

Alliance's vessel list. So I mopped it up a bit, cleaning up the sizing and got rid of the super carriers and changed Dreadnaughts into a sort of Destroyer/Carrier mix like what the covenant used as their main vessels because that, in my opinion, makes up the most wicked awesome ship combination in the universe.**

9. Part 2: Chapter 9: Traitor

Hello again All!

after a very rapid writing bout that I was blessed with over the weekend it happens that I have another chapter for you. :D

I know it is quick, but I tell you no lie when I say that this chapter was written by Sunday evening. the time since has been spent doing minor repair work or tweaking. And I must say that I really like the way it turned out. I hope you do as well.

PS. I made some corrections to Chapter 8, like correcting the fact that I wrote 7 on it **instead of 8 as well as a few small corrections. thank you greatly for reading and reviewing. **

**Now, The NRBE... **

**...I'm drawing a blank. Sorry... **

NRBE done... ON WITH THE CHAPTER!

I DO NOT OWN BW OR ANY OF THEIR TRADEMARKS! (AND I STILL REFUSE TO NAME THEM!)

**OH!... One more final thought. let me know what you think of this chapters codex. No one bothered to give me a hint as to what they wanted to have described so I went with the first thing that popped into my head. ENJOY! { :) **

* * *

><p>"Our Legacy"

Part Two: A Traitor In Our Midst.

**Chapter 9: Traitor **

**Date: January 31, 2681 **

Time: 1054 hrs.

Location: Eden Prime Surface, Sector 7.

* * *

><p>John Shepard watched the Marine stagger off toward the other end of the archeologist's camp and felt a small pain in his chest.<p>

She's had a really bad day. Yes, he'd been through a whole lot of very similar situations and ones that were many times more terrible. But that was him. After what he'd been through in his life it was all

common place. They were everyday nightmares for him, not the rare or occasional run of bad luck. But still, it made him want to say a prayer for it all to go a little better for her. She could use a break from this. But he didn't pray anymore. He and the Big Guy Upstairs haven't been on speaking terms for a long time.

So he just squared his shoulders and turned to the Spikes. He had seen dozens of these things since he had touched down, but he hadn't gotten an opportunity to see what they had been used for. Now that he saw, he was sickened.

_That goes far beyond sick and wrong, it's wrong-sick, _he thought as he neared the impaled humans. There were twenty tripods, fifteen of which had corpses suspended in the air. All grouped together on the eastern end of the camp where they were hidden from view behind the burnt out husks of the camps remains on one side, and the wall of a cliff that the camp sat under on the other. It was a rather clever place to to hide something that you don't want anyone to know about. With the rocky cliffs surrounding them on all sides save the north and the trench to the south it would be next to impossible to detect them through scanning. Anyone who didn't know it was there would have no idea where it was.

All of them wore casual clothing. He could see none of their faces, thankfully, because they had all been facing toward the rock wall of the cliff. But the nearer he got the more he noticed that all the skin he could see seemed rather dark. Which he took as rather strange, not that he was racist but why was everyone here so dark skinned? It wasn't until he circled around to their front that he noticed another identical feature of the corpses and his eyes widened in shock and remembrance of a nightmare. They all had glowing blue veins covering their dull coal black skin.

"Hell no." he whispered under his breath. He had seen this before, very far away from here. On the very furthest edge of the galaxy on a little garden world moon circling a gas giant orbiting a great red sun in a little system known only to a handful of individuals as Zion.

_That wasn't real, _he told himself. _It was all just a nightmare, It Wasn't REAL!_ But despite his denials he reached up and lightly touched the face of what had once been a woman, if the bone structure was anything to judge by. Whatever had once defined her as who she was had vanished and in its place was an empty husk of a body whose skin was glued to meatless bones by the nightmarish black skin and glowing blue lines.

The skin was pasty and lifeless and cracked under his fingertips. It was exactly as he remembered it A _husk._

He was torn out of his memories by a piercing scream that was immediately followed by rapid gunfire. He didn't wait for the scream to end before he had turned and was about to make haste to the assistance of Sergeant Williams who had walked to the other end of the camp to search for survivors. By the scream he guessed that she had found whatever was left of them.

Before he had moved though he heard a mechanical whirring and he turned to watch in near horror as the tripod's spikes retracted into themselves and the husks collapsed to the ground as their eye sockets

began to glow.

They were alive. And they were standing up.

Ignoring the screams for the moment he leapt backwards and hurled an active grenade. From experience he knew that these things didn't die until enough bodily harm had been done to shut down whatever it was that gave the Horrors life. Usually it required blowing them up. If that didn't work then crushing them worked just as well. Guns usually wouldn't work. The grenade blew before he was fully clear, driving the sound from his ears in temporary deafness as he leapt again for the remains of one of the shelters and he grabbed the biggest heaviest thing he could see. There was a wall that had collapsed but the support beam that had been holding it was still there. John opted for that. It was a solid metal beam crafted from an aluminum alloy that, while not nearly as strong as steel, would work just fine in dispatching whatever husks he could find.

Now properly armed against the legions of the undead, John turned to check for any husk that may have survived the blast of his grenade. Three of them had been incinerated in the inferno and another four had been blasted into the cliffs face reducing them to little more than a blue-black pulp. But the other eight had been left relatively unharmed by the blast. And they were already almost on top of him. With a mighty swing of his impromptu club three of the decrepit creatures were sent flying into the rock wall behind them. John almost wished he could hear so that he could hear the Squish as they hit it and were flattened by the incredible impact.

He hated these thing. For months after the nightmarish events of Zion mission John had tried to forget what had happened on that god forsaken moon. Tried to forget what had happened there and what he had been forced to endure and do to survive. There had been three survivors of the event. A medic, himself, and an A.I.

Only a week after their rescue the medic had killed herself and the A.I. had gone rampant and had to be put down. Only John lasted through it. Just like so many times before he had refused to die. He survived. He hated it then, and he was fairly certain that he still hated it now. But that didn't mean that he couldn't enjoy sending these things back to Hell.

The next Husk to close the distance was a short male, his clothes far too large for the skeletal form now wearing them. John swung over his head and brought the beam straight down on top of it's head driving the creature, now a viscous blue gel, to the ground where John's now enhanced strength drove it eight inches into the dirt.

Two more made their way to him as, he was sure, they were roaring their guttural moans. He was thankful that he didn't have to hear that, but again missed his hearing when he smashed them into the remains of one of the burning buildings, he would let the fire end their existence. The last of the fifteen approached him in their staggering run one on his right the other on his left, swinging their arms that ended in inch long talons that were sharp as razors. He swept his club to the right hurling that one into the air to John didn't know where. Then he turned to meet the last one as it swung at him. But he was a lot faster than he was the last time he'd met these things. With a rapid swing of his leg the thing toppled to the ground and the massive Spartan brought his boot down on it, twice, just to

make sure it was dead.

He stood steady as stone on the outside, but inside he was quivering. He took a few steadying deep breaths as the fog that covered his mind a moment earlier cleared to give rise to reasonable thinking. And with his reason, came his ability to hear. And the world was once again filled with a scream. It took him another full second to come back to reality as he realized that the scream belonged to Sergeant Williams.

Quick as he could John practically flew to the screams source and saw the Sergeant crawling backwards away from a collapsed shelter where another three husks had crawled out from. One of them was literally, in pieces and had stopped moving. But the other two, whom the Sergeant was currently firing on were clawing their way toward her.

John wasn't about to jump into view of a soldier who, at the moment, probably wasn't differentiating between friend and foe so he dropped to his knee, hefted his shotgun, overcharged it, and fired. The resulting force of the blast may as well have come from a cannon as the force blasted both Husks from their feet. They landed on the ground several yards away in a ruined heap. The blast had gotten Williams out of her blind fire stage and got her to cease her hold on the trigger of her rifle. John met her eyes to make certain that she recognized who he was then walked over to the two Husks as they struggled to rise and stomped them into oblivion.

After he was sure they were dead he returned to the Sergeant, who looked up at him as he approached, still in shock. He gave her a few moments to clear her head than asked, "you alright, Williams?"

She answered him with an incredulous stare, "No!" she practically shouted. "What wereâ€| how the helâ€| Were those the..?"

She watched Shepard as he nodded solemnly. "yesâ€| They were."

The young Marine put her head in her hands and sighed loudly. "What the hell did they do to them?" she asked after a few moments of clearing her head. "Oh my God, what did they do?" she whispered again.

"They changed them into something they could use against us." Shepard said calmly. "Probably trying to break our spirits. That's psychological warfare for you."

Williams shook her head hard, like she was trying to rid herself of a bad memory. "Hell if its not working" she whispered, so quietly John barely heard it, but he did. She must not have meant for him to hear it so he didn't reply to it. After another couple deep breaths she stood shakily and walked over to the two corpses of the stomped Husks. "Why crush them?" she asked as she looked them over. Looked like she was trying to hold her lunch so he guided her away from them with an arm. "That seems like a little overkill to me."

"The other ones didn't go down very easily. Seems crushing them is the surest way to make sure that they stay down."

She sent a wary look over to the one riddled with bullet holes, "Yah," she agreed. "bullets don't seem to stop them very well." When

she looked back at him a look crossed her face and her eyes went wide as she raised her rifle, pointed right at John's head and pulled the trigger

John saw the flair as the rifle muzzle came to life and resigned himself to death as he felt more than saw the rounds fly by his head. He was wondering why none of the bullets tore into his head. It was then that he realized that she hadn't been shooting _at_ him, but _behind_ him. He whirled around and saw two more Husks bearing down on him. The one Williams had shot would have been on his back right now if not for the rounds that had thrown it to the ground behind him.

Oh, John thought idly. _She did say that there were twenty-two of them here, right?_

With a rapid kick John threw the downed husk into the charging pair and threw his arm out. They never stood a chance as a biotic push strong enough to crush them hurled their skinny bodies against the wall of the cliff on this side of the camp. John felt a sharp pain flare and pulse in his brain and spine as the Biotics left their mark. He turned around and saw Williams doing the same to the last of the twenty-two Husks.

She looked up breathlessly to John, eyes wide. Her lower half splattered with blue gore after stomping the life out of the one under her feet. After a moment John asked, "You good?"

The Sergeant took a deep breath and nodded. "Yah," her voice quaked so she cleared her throat before adding, "Yah, I'm good."

As one they made there was to the last standing shelter. Williams made it to the door first and after checking the door panel grumbled. "It's locked."

"Not for long," Shepard moved to take her place at the door and she scooted to the side to watch out for any more husks or geth.

John pressed his left hand against the door panel and opened his mind to the influence of his ACNII. With the computer in his brain John worked his thoughts around the programs in the doors computer control and found the back door built into every computer in existence. Once in John programed the door to unlock and the red light on the door turned green signaling it was open.

A moment later he swiped his hand over the panel and the door opened. Armed with his pistol he swept inside and checked the room.

"Humans." a female voice exclaimed, "Thank the Maker!" John holstered his pistol when he saw the inhabitants. One was a red headed woman with short hair in her yearly thirties, the other was a man in his twenties. Both were curled around each other in one corner of the small shelter. They had moved everything in the room to try and hide behind, but there wasn't much besides a few boxes and a couple of tables.

When the woman saw him she stood shakily and asked, "Are we safe, can we come out now?"

Almost immediately after she spoke the young man, looking thoroughly spooked, cringed even further into their corner.
"Closethedoorclosethedoorclos ethedoor! Quicklyâ€|
Beforetheycomeback!... Hurry!"

_Wonderful, _John thought sourly,_ freaked out civilians, better be careful with this. _He raised a hand to stall them, "It's alright, your safe here now. We've cleared out the camp and most of the patrols seem to have moved on from this area. You should be safe here till evec can come get you."

The woman visibly relaxed at the news. "thank God. We've been holed up in this shelter for hours-" Her tirade was interrupted by the Sergeant's voice as it broke through the room.

"Diane!" John heard Williams' voice behind him, as she rushed into the room. he assumed she had come in to investigate what was taking him so long. Apparently she knew this person.

The Sergeant rushed past him and grabbed the Woman, Diane, in a fierce hug, which Diane returned just as fiercely.

Strike that, John. She knows her very well.

"Ashley, I thought you were dead."

"I thought so to for a while." There was mirth behind the voice and John figured that she was smiling. "I wouldn't be here if not for the big guy behind me. How'd you manage it?"

"Oh, it was terrible, Ashâ€| Manuel and I were sorting through some of the recent finds when we heard this terrible shrieking, we were about to run out when Kevin ran in a shouted to everyone to run for cover. We asked him what was up but he just told us the planet had come under attack. They told us to get out of sight. So I grabbed Manuel and hid. We've been here ever sinceâ€|" A pleading look crossed her face and she asked, "What happened out there? Is anyone else alive out there?"

Ashley looked crestfallen. "Noâ€| Spartan and me are it. The whole planet is being attacked by some kind of synthetics. I think their called the Geth." While Ashley explained what was going on to Diane, John took the opportunity to read a little on this Manuel fellow. He had calmed down slightly when the Sergeant came in. it was good to see a familiar face he guessed. But the guy had kept whispering erratically to himself about the voices, that the end of humanity has come, and how our time was up and a bunch of other stuff that didn't make a lick of sense.

John eased himself over to the younger man. And crouched down a few feet away. Manuel quieted as he saw John move closer. "I'm not here to hurt you, I'm here to help. What's wrong?"

"EVERYTHINGâ€| can'tyousee!Ourtimeisoverâ€|OVER!" his whispers were breathless but very quiet, like he was afraid of being heard by someone.

"Who are you afraid of? Who scared you?"

"The HERALD!...no! nono, the PROPHET! the Prophet is here to proclaim our destruction!" he wasn't making sense, but John got the feeling that the crazy young man was on to something important. There was something this kid knew that he needed to get out of him, and something about this prophet felt...wrong!

"Who is this Prophet? Did you see him? Is he here?"

The man nodded. Not erratic this time though. "he leads them...the machines." the whisper was plain and clear. Not fast and jumbled like before. "He leads them..."

Well, John thought, that's something I can use. "Who is the Prophet?" he asked again, more adamant.

"The Turian. We was here before the attack, asking about the Herald..."

"The Herald?"

"The messenger. And the MESSAGE! It is both... It knows..."

"But what is it? what is the Herald?"

"IT KNOWS! We have unearthed the heart of Evil, Awakened the BEAST. Unleashed the Darkness..."

John tried a few more times to get answers out of the man, but that was all he could get. At least I know there was a Turian here... A Turian is leading them... And that is from a man that has quite literally lost his mind. Yeah... that's reliable. John's thoughts were interrupted by Diane. "I'm sorry." She said as she came up behind him, "Manuel has a brilliant mind, but he has always been a bit..." she searched for the right word "unstable." She concluded.

Manuel shot to his feet, anger in his eyes. "Is it madness to see the FUTURE? To see the Destruction rushing towards us? To see that there is No Escape? No Hope?" he cried. "No" he answered his own question sorrowfully. "I am the only sane one left..."

"I gave him a double dose of his medication when he... went over a bit."

"Sergeant," he decided he'd better redirect the conversation. They had been here long enough. "I think we had better head for the tram and get to the Warehouses. We need to find my team and find the beacon."

"The HERALD!" Manuel interrupted.

"Hush Manuel. Go lie down for a bit."

"You're right," Ashley conceded. "We need to keep moving."

"Thank you both for checking for us. I'm not sure what we would have done if you hadn't." Diane said appreciatively. "Good luck to both of you."

"You too," Williams replied. "Stay here till rescue comes to pick you

up. With any luck we'll be out of this in no time." Both women shared another hug before the Sergeant walked out of the shelter. Before John left he heard Manuel whisper darkly. "Luck won't save you."

After sealing the door Shepard and Williams quickly made their way to the tram station. At the tram was a small settlement with a dozen building most of them being dwellings for the people that farmed the surrounding area. All of them were dead and had been changed into husks, over two dozen of them. It seemed that after the Geth cleared an area they would leave the creatures sitting in wait to ambush anyone that may come behind them, which John thought was both clever and downright devious. They were using their enemies own numbers to provide them with reinforcements. Very smart and very useful. But that was something that John considered playing dirty. Sure, kicking a guy on the crotch and throwing dirt or sand in his eyes may not be fair, but that's playing to win. Turning your enemies corpses into lifeless zombies to attack anyone that comes by them latter is sick.

After clearing the settlement and checking for survivors. Of which there were none that they could find. The pair took the tram to the Warehouses. On their way, Williams described the layout of the storage facility they were going to. A few minutes into their trip, as the Tram crested a hilltop she gasped and looked over the horizon. Far off in the distance, maybe ten miles north from their current position on the tracks was a massive construct that John recognized as clearly not human.

"Is that a ship?" Williams asked, in something akin to awe. "How in the hell did they get it on the ground?"

It was commonly known, even to the Citadel council races, that a ship that was more than a kilometer long was not really able to land on a planet. They were just too big and stretched too far for an earthbound landing to be possible.

This ship seemed to ignore that universal fact. It resembled a ginormous crawfish and stood straight up on a half dozen massive legs and was towering over three kilometers above Eden Primes forested landscape as well as the city skyscrapers behind it. John had served once on several of Humanities Supermassive Dreadnaughts before during heavy engagements against the Covenant. And he knew from experience that they were much larger and much more dangerous. But without one of those here to put it into perspective, the ship was horrifying and terrifyingly familiar.

"I don't know" Shepard lied partially. It was true that he didn't know exactly what it was. But he did have something of an idea. "Looks like we could be pretty close to finding out though."

The ride went by fairly quick, and in only ten minutes after leaving the dig sight the pair found themselves standing at the dock of the Warehouses. Ashley explained on the ride that there was another tram on the far side of the facility that traveled directly to the nearest space dock three miles to the west. And that this is where the Beacon was supposed to be picked up at. But since it was scheduled to be picked up at noon she figured that it was probably still stored away in one of the warehouses. John silently agreed with her. There would be no reason to move a fragile and ancient artifact before the people

that had been sent to pick it up had arrived. Why risk breaking it when it could be safely stored into a secure facility?

The Sergeant laughed at that point, "Yah right." She laughed, "As if we were secure against an army of highly advanced synthetics."

"It's better than nothing," The Spartan had replied with a shrug of his shoulders.

The banter left them as they found where the Geth had gone. It seems as if they had all moved here. They were swarming the place as if looking for something.

Spartan and Marine got down to business as they moved as stealthily as possible through the facility toward the Warehouse that Ashley had said the Beacon was being held at. It was in the middle of the facility. The way was paved with Geth patrols, and there were more than a few close calls as they had to fight their way out of more than a few dangerous situations.

As he saw her more in combat John marveled at how Williams, _noâ€| Ashley_ was fighting. Despite losing her entire platoon, losing a great many friends, and being attacked by what she had believed was a zombie at the time; She was handling herself very well. She was well trained and her combat proficiency was exemplary. She wielded both her rifle and pistol with the practiced ease of a master markswoman. And when she got in close, she wasn't afraid to yank out her knife and hack and slash where it was needed. And what was more; she had displayed impressive knowledge of Marine/Spartan tactics.

Contrary to popular belief, it was entirely possible, and not at all uncommon, for a Norm (what Spartans had termed people with sub-Spartan abilities) or even a team of Norms to be advantageous to a Spartan that had found themselves in their company. And with proper training they were, on occasion, actually even more beneficial than another Spartan.

Ashley seemed quite well versed on the subject. Which was actually fairly rare in the ranks of the Alliance military as Only N7's were required to train on the subject and anyone below that military classification were required to have special permission to take the training. _It appears that Ashley Williams is much more than just your average Marine._ John mused while they made their way through the compound.

It wasn't until they neared their target almost twenty minutes later that the Geth patrols started reducing. Apparently they had started moving out again. Which was good for them because they needed to find the Beacon. With any luck it would be here in the warehouse that found themselves about to enter.

The first door they came to, in the back of a garage hidden from plain view of the street and any onlookers, was locked tight. John unlocked it and they both stepped into the room. They were met with the sound of primed rifles and beaming lights in their eyes.

"Spartan?"

John knew that voice.

"Williams, their mine," he told her calmly before she could start shooting then looked at the source of the voice. "Lieutenant, get these lights out of my eyes."

"Yes Sir, Spartan. Men, Weapons down!" Alenko's order was immediately followed with the sound of deep breaths and sighs of relief. Sounded as if the Marines from the Normandy have had a rough go of it since he left them in the Heron.

Once his eyes cleared he could see the room and its inhabitants. It was a small room in the back of the Warehouse. Maybe twelve yards square. Most of red team were here. John was concerned when he didn't see everyone but quickly dismissed it. Most likely split up when the army showed up to avoid detection. At least, that's what he would have done.

Shepard looked at Ashley. "Serge, take a breather, you've earned it." She nodded her thanks and moved to the furthest wall from the door at sat down on an unused crate, she looked exhausted. John then turned to Kaiden. "Lt, give me a SitRep."

Kaiden looked almost as bad as Ashley as he made his way over to him but he began explaining with a clear voice. "After you jumped we continued on and dropped about two clicks south of the compound. It was as close as we could get with all the Geth around. After we landed we made straight for here but hit a lot of resistance. " he looked down and shook his head for a moment before continuing, sounding more than a little down trodden. "We lost Jenkins on the way to a dozen patrolling drones. Then lost Mokna during our rush here. After we searched around, we found out the Beacon's been moved. Don't know where. After all that's happened we're all low on ammo and medical stuffs but we're still combat ready."

John sent a searching gaze around the room, "Where are the rest of the marines?"

"Turc and Linda still had working SFG's so their looking around the warehouse for anything useful. Nihlus and Daniel volunteered to scout around and see if he could find the beacon. Their SFG's are working too, so we figured that would be the best way to move on from here. They left fifteen minutes ago."

"Do you know where he's going?"

"He said they'd be moving toward the Tram at the other end of the compound. We found orders to move the Beacon to the space dock in the computers so he figured that would be the best place to look."

John nodded in agreement, then added questioningly, "Lieutenant, Notice any zombies around?"

"What?" the look was enough to let John know that he hadn't seen any husks.

"Never mind." He said, "If you'd have seen them you'd know."

He didn't look convinced but he took the explanation as if he was like the good officer he was. "So, what's our next step."

"Pretty straight forward if you ask me, I'll go catch up with Nihlus. You and the others are going to catch up. when you do we'll continue the search for the beacon. Do you still have radio contact?" Kaiden shook his head. "As soon as Nihlus left it went out. Geth must have set up a block."

John nodded and moved to the rest of the Marines. "Any of you have a spare headset?"

"I do, 1!" Garin, the large human marine shouted as he produced from his pockets a thick black round disk about three inches in diameter. "I always carry a spare in case mine breaks." He said as he handed it over. "Not many people wear my size."

"Thanks." John pressed it over his right ear and hear a click as it shrank around his ear and extended a green eyepiece over his right eye. A moment later a HUD sprang into his view as the earpiece powered up. The motion sensor, comm unit, and life signs were out because of the comm block. But if he looked around he could see the specs of the people that came into it's field of vision. That would have to work.

Ashley had stood up and moved over to Shepard, "What's the plan?"

"I'm going ahead to catch up with the rest of our people and get them to hold up till all of you catch up." He answered then looked between the two.

"Ah," he smiled lightly, "Introductionsâ€¦ Sergeant Williams, this is Lieutenant Alenko. He is the Marine commander for our team here. You will be assisting them on their way to meet myself and the rest of our squad."

Ashley looked like she wanted to object but she held it in and answered professionally, "Aye, Spartan."

John nodded and continued. "Head to the tram station. I'll meet you there."

They both acknowledged and John left through the door he and Ashley had entered through.

As he left the garage he activated his own backup SFG, his primary which he needed a full body suit to use, would render him completely undetectable to all but the most advanced sensory equipment. _At least, I thought it was undetectable._ Funny thing was that it's inventor, a close friend of John's had believed so as well. But that didn't seem to stop these Geth from finding him anyway.

His backup Stealth Field Generator was the same as the Alliance standard SFG it didn't do a lot more than just bend light around it's user. It wouldn't keep him off a motions tracker and a trained eye could track the blur of the field. But in situations like this, it would work just fine. After making sure the way was clear ahead of him he was off in a sprint that carried him very quickly through the ruins of the storage facility. Large warehouses were left in ruins at what looked like the attack of orbital strikes. The entire place looked to be decimated. That would explain why there weren't any Husks around. You have to have a body in order to change it. And

anyone here was probably inside one of the buildings. They were probably all dead and buried under thousands of pounds of rubble.

John would have asked why if he hadn't spent the last nineteen years of his life in the military. He had given up asking why people killed each other a long time ago.

He had made it about half way to the tram before he came across his first sign of life. In the middle of a wide street was a group of three massive Geth units and a half dozen husks, all dead. One of the Mechs was a full foot taller than the others and it was painted a bright silver. The other two were red. He had fought some of these on his track to the Barracks earlier this morning. They were whicked hard to kill when you didn't fall on them or have a 'near' undetectable SFG to give you an edge. In between them was a trail of blood. Purple blood. It went from the corner of the street and moved down an alley to a small shed between two large garages. The shed was still standing so John decided it was worth a look, Maybe Nihlus and Daniel were discovered by the Geth on their way to the tram and were wounded. They could have sought shelter in the shed until their teams came to find them.

John moved to the shed and slipped inside and was surprised to find Daniel, the Sangieli Marine from the Normandy leaning against one of the walls. His eye-piece showed that he had a steady heartbeat, but only a partial one. There was a large hole on the right side of his chest where a round had torn through his armor as well as a half dozen other very gruesome looking wounds on his legs, chest, and arms. Apparently the mechs had shot one of his hearts, and it looked like the rest of the injuries were from the Husks claws. And by the bio-readings his eye-piece was giving him, Daniel had lost a lot of blood and didn't have long to live without some serious medical aid. Thankfully, John had something that might be able to fix that, if it wasn't already to late.

The Spartan kneeled in front of the young Sangheili and reached back down to his hip. His armor made a hissing noise as he removed a small vial from his armored leg. It was a clear tupe filled with a clear liquid that he knew wasn't actually a liquid at all. It was in fact a legion of medical grade nano-bots. Commonly referred to as Med-Mites, These little machines could potentially halt a life threatening injury, as long as that injury did not require the growth of a new limb. These little things could speed up the healing process by nearly hundred times and could repair almost any damaged tissue in mere moments. The only thing keeping these things from being widely used was the fact that each vial cost over seventy-five thousand Alliance Credits, or in human terms, right around fifty thousand dollars. Thankfully being a Spartan paid very well.

John knew that a Sangheili did not actually require two hearts to survive. So even if the the Med-Mites couldn't manage to get it working again, there was a very good chance that he would live through this if he injected the nanites soon.

Shepard pressed a small button on the base of the tube and a syringe grew out the top. John turned it and pressed the needle into the hole in Daniels chest. And injected the Med-mites into the Sangheili's body. John waited a few moments to see if they would work. The nano-bots were built to detect if they would be able to save the

target, if the could not, they would shut down, so if you didn't see them working you knew they subject was dead and could move on. If the nano-bots could save the subject, then they would begin repairs. John didn't hold his breath as he waited; he knew that holding his breath wouldn't do a thing to help the wounded Marine. He was pleased a few moments later when he saw the skin reforming over the wound.

Good, he'll live. With that out of the way John retraced his steps to the road and kept moving forward. He didn't worry about Daniel, if there were any mechs around the area they would have found him already and the Med-Mites would keep him asleep till they had complete their repairs. And from what his wounds had looked like that would probably take a while.

Back at the street John looked back at the three mechs in the road. He knew that he should probably get moving, but something in his gut told him to pick up the big red's rifles. He had thrown away several of his smaller weapons during the massive fight he had survived at the Barracks and had yet to replace them. He really couldn't think of any weapons better than those rifles. He had instantly fallen in love with the heavy rifle, when he had first pulled that big heavy trigger. It was practically a plasma thrower. His mind made up he reached down and hefted both of the guns that were both shorter and heavier than his own assault rifle and maglocked them to his armor. One on the outside of his right calf, the other on his left hip. He was about to head off again when he tossed a look in the direction of the massive silver mech. He wished that they carried their weapons like the red ones. He had seen their plasma cannon in action and really wished he could carry that kind of firepower around with him. But alas, it was built into the machine's right arm.

Dam machines, why do they have to make everything so difficultâ€¦|_ after making sure the maglocks were secure he continued on.

In only a few short minutes John had traversed the remainder of the distance between him and the tram and he came up on a hill that obscured his vision of the tram. In seconds he climbed it and sent his view ahead of him to see if the way was clear. What he saw was far from what he had expected. It was just like the last tram station. Here there were a number of small buildings. Most of them probably housing for the warehouse workers.

Aw, Crap... Today just isn't my day.

He had thought most of the workers had been killed in building collapses. But it looked like most of them had been herded into the small plateau that stretched out before him. The entire small settlement looked like it was flooded with Husks. There were scores of them, easily over a hundred, more like a hundred and fifty. And all of them were scrambling to reach the roof of a small building. A small concession stand really, if the battered sign above the large window was anything to judge by. They were swarming the building swinging their arms about trying to find a way to climb up because on the roof of the small building was Nihlus Kryik. The Alliance's first visiting Spectre.

Good thing I nabbed those guns a few minutes ago.

* * *

><p>Nihlus could honestly see that his venture into Alliance space had held the record for most unusual events seen or participated in in his life. Usually he would tell himself that this was a good thing. But right now he wasn't entirely sure that it was.<p>

He was standing on top of a short building that he understood to be some kind of restaurant. _Hank's Hotdogs_ was what his translator had showed him when he saw the beaten sign. And he briefly wondered what these Hotdogs tasted like before he leveled his shotgun and fired once more into the writhing horde of _what did Daniel call them before he fell unconscious?_ He thought for one moment before the name came to him

Ah, yes _Zombies_ what the hell is a Zombie anyway? _Nihlus had certainly never come across anything like these creatures before, and the way that Daniel had reacted was rather extreme, at least, according to his own understanding of the creatures up to that moment. Now Nihlus was beginning to understand Daniel's fear. These things just wouldn't DIE! And their groaning and screaming was deafening. He couldn't hear a thing

He had been up here for the last ten minutes firing randomly into the horde below him until he noticed that the ones he had shot had started standing up again. Nihlus has always prided himself on his ability to stay calm and controlled under any circumstance, but he had to admit that when he shot something with a weapon that had enough force to blast off an arm and head, but several moments later it would stand back up and start attacking again. It was downright freakish AND completely unnatural. Even a Krogan Warlord couldn't do that and they were easily five, maybe six times the physical size of these decayed creatures.

The more he fired into the throng below him the more he learned what it was like to truly feel terror. He realized that there was no way he would be able to fight his way out of this problem and there was no backup coming. At least, not anything that would be able to save him before these things got to him. He was almost out of ammunition. And once he was there was absolutely nothing he could do to stop the creatures that had already started tearing down the building he was on top of from tearing him to shreds. Accept activating the thermal detonator that he had maglocked to his belt. He had grabbed four of them before he left the _Normandy_ and they had been eternally useful against the creatures below him. But he refused to use the last one just in case he needed it for something special.

And he could think of no better reason than saving himself from an excruciating death of being torn, limb from limb, by the sea of human shaped monstrosities surrounding his little island of doom.

He spared the thought only two seconds before he nodded his head in silent agreement with his dark thoughts. He would wait till the creatures had torn _Hank's Hotdogs_ down and wait till they had converged upon him, then he would activate the detonator. That way he would destroy as many as possible for anyone that came along after him. Hopefully they would be able to fight through whatever was left of the horde.

With his mind made up he fired even faster than before, cool and calm in his thinking, he had resigned himself to his fate, there was no reason to believe that there would be a miracle here. Turians didn't

believe in miracles. So he would kill as many of these things as he could before they pulled him down. He focused on one Zombie and would fire until it stopped moving then pick a new target.

Why do these dam human weapons run out of ammunition so quickly. He thought as the shotgun he was holding suddenly went empty and he slid another ammo block into the ammo slot. But subconsciously he was grateful. If he hadn't switched out his own weapons with the human weapons he knew that he wouldn't have managed to kill even one of these things. The grainsized rounds that the Citadel council races made their weapons fire, while giving a near limitless amount of ammunition, was also too small to do any sort of damage against these zombies. Well, okay, he may have managed one or two kills with his own weapons, but these Alliance guns were much more effective.

He idly wished that he had gotten a chance to test his new weapons against a Krogan before he had died. He had really wanted to see the look of confusion on his face when he realized that he was being shot by a weapon that could actually kill him with a single shot. It would have been pricelessâ€¦ But thus was life.

He had managed to down another three of the creatures when something strange happened. There was a shift in the creatures movements it was barely noticeable as first but Nihlus was sure of it when they started turning and moving away from his little island. He was completely confused by this but didn't let it sway his aim as he aimed and fired again, finishing off another target with a sixth shot. That was when he heard a new sound coming out over the din of screaming and choked moans. This one was a very high pitched whine. Like he would expect to hear from a high powered machine gun, then he recognized it and looked around for the Geth responsible for it. That at least he could kill with one shot. But when he found the owner of the weapon, he was shocked.

About a hundred meters from his little island in the sea of zombies, stood seven foot human wielding a red Geths rifle in each hand. He had tried lifting one of them when he saw what they were capable of, but it was far too heavy to be able to wield comfortably in open combat. But the Spartan seemed unfazed by the added weight as he strode down the hill firing the weapons on full auto into the Horde of zombies that had now fully turned their attention to him. But they only walked to their doom. Because when he turned the rifles upon the unsuspecting horde a glowing bright orange beam tore into their ranks, tearing to shreds anything that came into contact with the lethal orange lances for more than a second. It was simply awesome to take in. in less than a minute of constant fire the entire population of the settlement had been reduced to little more than a huge mass of burnt out husks and viscous purple gel with an arm or leg twitching here or there.

Nihlus refused to be impressed, if he could have walked so easily while carrying two of the heavy rifles he would have done the same thing.

After checking to make sure that there were no more of the creatures hanging around the bottom of _Hanks Hotdogs_ Nihlus leapt to the ground landing lightly on his feet and waited for the Spartan to reach him.

"Thanks for the assist, Spartan." He said aloud when the large man

was within speaking distance.

The large man waved his hand and replied with a big smile on his face, "Anytime Spectre. Anytimeâ€¦"

"where are the rest of you marines?"

"I told them to meet us at the Tram."

"Ah, best we'd better get moving then."

"Agreed, I'd rather not stand around these husks any longer than necessary."

They started heading in the direction of the towering ship in the distance, and a question occurred to Nihlus. "Is that one yours by chance?" he asked while pointing to the massive dreadnaught.

The Spartan shook his head in answer, "No, we build them bigger, and smaller than that, but that is not one of ours. I've never seen it's like before. it must be one of the Geth's ships."

"I figured as much. Did you, by chance, find the marine that came with me, Daniel was his name. he and I got separated when we met up with those three Geth and the zombies."

"Zombies?"

"that's what Daniel called them when he saw them."

The Spartan laughed at that. "Makes sense I guess."

"Why's that?"

"Oh, that's right, you don't have zombies do you. Basically they are an imaginary creature. They're dead bodies that had come back to life used in scary stories and movies. It's for fun."

Nihlus just looked at the tall man for a moment as they walked, "Imaginary?" he asked genuinely perplexed. "these things were real, not some figment of my imagination, and who in their right mind would invent such a horrible creature for fun. I swear you Humans are stranger and stranger the more I get to know you."

"I can't say a lot against that." the Spartan replied strangely. "We are rather strange." that he added with a straight face.

"Daniel?"

"Yah, I found him, he'll live. He was pretty beat up though."

"ah, good. that makes at least one thing that has gone right today."

They moved in relative silence as they made their way up into the Tram complex till the Spartan said. "Did you hear that?"

Nihlus looked around but saw nothing to indicate anything was amiss. But he knew from experience with this human that his hearing was very

fine. "what is it?" he whispered as not to impede the Spartans hearing.

He drew a large and powerful looking pistol from his side as he answered also in a whisper, "something's up ahead."

They both took to separate sides of the hall as they closed in on the source of the sound that the Human heard. A few moments later the Nihlus heard it himself. Someone, or something, was walking toward them from down an intersecting hallway.

Both, Spectre and Spartan prepared their weapons as they readied themselves for a confrontation as they rounded the corner.

Nihlus' eyes widened in surprise. "Seren!" he exclaimed.

The Turian Spectre turned in surprise. He had been walking away from the pair in the opposite direction toward the tram. When he saw the two men walking toward him he smiled a turian smile. "Nihlus."

Though his friend looked the same as when he last saw him, he couldn't help but think something was off. He wasn't sure what it was, but there was definitely something off. It was his voice, he decided. His tone didn't sound right. _He must be coming down with something._ he reasoned, but he couldn't help but feel slightly reserved about finding Seren here of all places. He decided to voice his concern.

"Seren, what are you doing here. We're in Alliance space. How did you get here?"

"calm down Nihlus," Seren calmly replied. "I was on something of a vacation. Since I didn't have a lot to do at the moment I decided to visit human space and see for myself what everyone was talking about back home." He cast a look around the hall they were standing in. "and I must say. Everything I've heard has been a vast understatement." He said that with his gaze stopping on the Spartan that still had his pistol up and ready to fire if needed.

Nihlus caught himself and waved the Spartan down. "Spartan, he's fine. He's an old friend of mine."

He grunted as he dropped his aim and waved to the newcomer than stepped around the pair to check the other halls for threats.

"So?" Seren began, "You're working with the Alliance on this one are you?"

"It's sort of a mutual endeavor we have going on here, but you know I can't talk about it."

The look that crossed Seren's eyes was strained at best. "Yes," he sighed, "I do know that. Sorry if I scared your Human." The word was a barely concealed growl. Nihlus knew that Seren disliked human. He knew he practically despised them for the events of the first contact war. So he wasn't exactly buying that he had come to visit one of Humanities paradises. That just didn't line up. "Seren, we both know that you don't like humans. So what are you really doing here."

His eyes widened and a moment passed before he lifted his hands placatingly. "Alright, Nihlus." He smirked lightly if sorrowfully, "you always could read me like a book. I detected the Geth outside of Alliance space barely a week ago, I sent word to the Citedal, but wasn't sure it would get there in time. So." He shrugged, "I followed them here. I only landed a half hour ago. I may not like Humans, but that doesn't mean I can't lend a hand where it's needed." That placated him. Nihlus knew that Seren had bad history with Humans, but that story was one hundred percent Seren, despite how much he disliked someone, he was always willing to help out. Even if it was on the more shady side of the law.

He still couldn't shake off the feeling of trepidation. But he shrugged it off. This was his friend, and right now, this planet could definitely use another hero to help it out. "We'll, Good. We could definitely use the help."

Seren smiled at that. "alright then, what the situation."

"Not good." Nihlus began as he nodded to the Spartan, motioning they were ready to go, he would explain what was going on later. Right now he had to get Seren up to speed. They started down the hall toward the tram while he explained.

"The geth have shattered practically every defense this planet had to offer. We have a fleet that's saposed to show up any minute now, but they're going to have their hands full up there for a while before they can help out any of us with what we have down here."

"Hopefully that won't take to long."

It shouldn't if what I've seen of their technology so far has anything to say about it. Seren, these people have so much to offer our society. I mean, they have combat medicine that can heal wounds that would otherwise kill a man before help arrived. I don't understand why the Council is so stagnant in their endeavors for a peace. Who cares if they have A.I. when lives are in the balance?" Nihlus just shook his head in amazed frustration.

"You really think so?"

"I know so, after what I've seen these past two week I can only look back and imagine the number of lives that could have been saved if they had just signed the treaty right after the war." They walked in silence for a moment until Nihlus continued. "I do not doubt the Council Seren, but after everything, it really does make me want to ask, why?"

"Tis not our duty to ask Nihlus, only to obey."

"True, but still."

"Anything else I should know about?" Seren questioned.

"Only one. There are these things that the Geth have been changing Humans into. They call them Zombies." He whistled shrilly in awe and continued. "Seren, you may not believe me when I say it, but they are a nightmare to kill. They look like a decaying human, but they are harder to kill than a Krogan hopped up on red sand."

Seren who had fallen slightly behind answered slowly. "guess we have our work cut out for us then."

"That we do."

"Don't worry then, I'm sure we'll have everything under control soon."

Nihlus thought his tone sounded strange in that last sentence and was about to ask what was bothering his old friend but he never got the chance. He didn't even have time to warn the Spartan as he heard the click of a Human weapon sliding a round into the chamber. Before he heard the shot. It was the last thing he ever heard. The round tore through his head and out his right eye and he collapsed. He wasn't sure how he was still seeing things. He should be dead right now but he could still see, though his body would obey none of his commands. Then was falling and he could see the Spartan ahead of him. Saw him spin then he saw the thermal detonator that had been on his belt fly past his head. _Serenâ€| what have you done?_

"_**BOOOOOM**_"

His world went white.

* * *

><p>John Shepard spun as he heard the shot but didn't even turn half way around before he heard a high pitched beep. And he knew what had happened. As he finished his turn he saw the thermal detonator that Nihlus had on his belt flying right toward him. He had no time to move as he watched it go off in slow motion, his Spartan Time kicking in. but he knew there was nothing he could do to reduce the impact of the explosion as it reached for him. He would have activated his matrix if he had enough time and any more charge in it. But there were only fractions of seconds left before the blinding flash hit him full force. It felt like an eternity, but as soon as the blast hit him, time sped up again to normal speed.<p>

"_**BOOOOOM**_" it was all he heard as his world turned white, his shield held then faltered against the whirling inferno and John was hurled against the wall behind him. The slam was more than his energy shield could take and it flared and died. John was left in a white and soundless world as his senses fought to right themselves before whoever had thrown the bomb came to finish the job the blast had begun. They didn't come back soon enough.

The next thing he knew for certain was that someone had shot him with a human weapon right through the right side of his chest. And he knew he had been betrayed. He had listened to their conversation, and while he couldn't understand anything that Seren had said, he had heard every word that Nihlus had. Thank god for translators. Then there was another round. And another. Then three more. The last thing John was able to think before he blacked out from the pain was, _why can't aliens ever learn that Human hearts are on the left!_ And his world was swallowed by darkness.

* * *

><p>Citadel Codex: Aliens Systems Alliance / Human

Biology**

**Humans are an Omnivorous Bipedal Mammalian species of primates originating from the Planet Earth with an average life-span of 157 years. Human's bear live young who are capable of eating whole foods at four to six months of age and reach full physical maturity in eighteen years. They are Plantigrade, have five digits on their hands and feet, and walk upright and their skin comes in a plethora of shades ranging from deep reds and browns, to light tan and pink. Humans also possess the remarkable ability to grow
'**_**hair**_**'*****a trait that is a rarity among sapient species.**

**Humans are as strong as Drell and are capable of feats of endurance that excel those of all known species save the Jiralhanae and the Krogan. This ability however is tempered by their high water dependency. Whereas even the physically unimposing Vollus can last five days without water, humans, even in perfect physical condition, can barely last three. **

**Humans also possess a gland which naturally produces the Chemical Adrenalin. Something once believed to be wholly unique to the Krogan. Once brought under a situation of extreme duress this Gland had been known to provide the strongest of humans with temporary boosts in strength and endurance that meet expected Krogan standards. **

But even among all these strange traits there is one that is truly unique to Humans. Human Genetic Diversity. Until their discovery, it was common knowledge that, even among ancient extinct species, most members of any species share a majority of their genetic code with most of their race; However, Humanities genetic code completely ignores this basic and fundamental fact. The Human Genome is so vast and diverse that after the first DNA scans of several different humans, it was claimed the facilities used to complete the tests were faulty and a retest was demanded. This trait marks humanity as a true genetic rarity in **galactic society.**

* * *

><p>Whew... 9,656 words in there. NO LONGER the longest chapter! :D

to expand on what I said up top...

I think this chapters codex seemed a little ranty, but I think it covered everything it needed to. just seems a little long...

To answer a review I received for last chapter about the Codex organization method I use to define it... look it up on the wiki... I wrote it down as near as I was capable without a filing system built into the chapter... if it is that hard to understand just look at what the last item on the list is. that is what the codex entry itself will be covering. I am sorry if that is not satisfactory, but it is as good as i'll be able to make it without a very clear and concise description of what you are finding wrong with it. again, I apologize for that, but I am doing the best I can here... so please, work with me a bit on this. and just for vanities sake, I sorta like it :)... hehe

**other than that I really don't have a lot to say except that you

guys are awesome for reading and that I greatly appreciate any reviews that come my way that could potentially assist me in writing better and faster :D**

Thank you all! :D

10. Part 2: Chapter 10: The Beacon

Hey Peoples!

I AM BACK!... Again... yes I know, it was again really quick and I can not give you an explanation as to why, all I know is that 'the _Force_ has been Strong in this one' and I can honestly say that I like it. I wish I could write this fast all the time. it would be awesome. as long as it is with me I think I'm gonna try to write a few chapters for my other stories while working on this one. so here's hoping that I can keep up this pace.

Now; the NRBEC:

this chapter I think is a little on the long side... yah it is a good bit longer than I originally thought the chapters would get, but still... heh. :)

I beat Halo four. it was epic awesome. I have reconsidered my earlier thoughts on not including anything from that game, as of now, I would like to include it, but as that is a long way off from here lets just wait and see what happens. :D

**another thing that I've come across since the last chapter is the realization that the Halo series shows us about, what, seven different races for the Kig-Yar. I do NOT like this. they should show us a little bit of consistency with the races of Halo. I mean. look at the Sangheili, Jiralhanae, and the Unggoy. For every game that they have been in their forms has been refined and smoothed over. but not the Kig-Yar, NOOOOooooo. every time that a new game comes out they give us a new species to take their place. so in order to allay any sort of confusion on their appearance look up what the Kig-Yar Skirmishers of Halo 3 look like. that is what the Kig-Yar of Our Legacy look like, because I like that version best. the others I will most likely bring in as new races just because they look so cool. like the Halo 4 Kig-Yar. They Look Like Freakin RAPTORS for Christ Sake. that is wicked awesome! but, as for right now, I'm only using the Skirmishers. Cause they beast, and awesome looking . { :D
...**

**YES I KNOW that there were two sub-species of Kig-Yar in the game, but I don't feel like including that into my story because I don't really like it And it was never actually used in game. every time you fought them there would only ever be one type, I think that the gaming company decided to screw with peoples heads when they put that fact in the wiki. cause even 343 didn't follow that rule. **

Those of you who have as of yet NOT played Halo four... Play it. Beat it. Love it. Learn the Ending! it tis awesome.

as of now, that is all I can think of on NRBEC. so here we will end it... _for now... MWAHAHAHAHAHA!_

****without anymore interruption! ON WITH CHAPTER 10!****

****I DO NOT OWN MASS EFFECT OR HALO OR ANYTHING THAT WAS BIRTHED FROM THOSE GAMES OR THEIR CREATORS! ****

*** * ***

><p>"Our Legacy"

****Part Two: A Traitor In Our Midst.****

****Chapter 10: The Beacon ****

****Date: January 31, 2681 ****

****Time: 1153 hrs.****

****Location: Eden Prime Surface, Sector 4.****

"Ouch," Kevvek's shrill Unggoy voice broke out to shatter the silence in the area. "Looks like someone's had a really bad day."

"Really?" Came Ashley's sarcastic reply.

"Sorry, Ma'am." Kevvek's response was halted, "Just making an observation."

Kaiden rubbed his temples and raised a hand stall any more retaliation. "Cool it, Serge. Kev didn't mean anything by it." He looked to the grunt to his left with a stare that said, _Dude, not cool._

Kev picked up immediately. Grunts may not be known for their tact, but usually they could take a hint. "Sorry, Sergeant."

The Sergeant just stared at him for a few moments then sighed as she shook her head. "No, Lt's right, I'm on edge. And I'm sorry about that." She looked down at the ground, taking in the destroyed Geth, Husks and deep purple blood trail on the ground and sighed. "It's just been a rough day..."

"Nah, it's all good Serge."

Kaiden silently thanked his lucky starts. This mission has been nothing but one bad turn after another and he wasn't looking forward to what he had to do afterward. There were two men that wouldn't be going home tonight. The last thing he wanted to add to that list was a blood feud between one of his crew and a Sergeant that seemed to have a certain dislike of aliens.

Kaiden sent his gaze over the Sergeant who had busied herself with examining the blue black corpses of the half dozen husks lying in the ground; he assumed she was making sure they were dead. _No,_ he corrected his earlier thought of having to write a report explaining the reason two of their team won't be returning to duty. _There are a lot of people won't be going home tonight._

He looked up and followed the trail to the corner that it arched around and disappeared behind. Then stood and followed it around the corner. Looked like whoever made the trail had been looking to put

some distance between themselves and whatever those things were that attacked it. Maybe trying to find a place to hide. Or just trying not to let their body be found so the Geth couldn't turn it into one of thoseâ€¦_Things_. The thought made him angry. What kind of species turned the dead against the living. That was far beyond wrong. It was sick.

He looked back to his team of Six Marines and felt a pain at having lost men under his command. That had never happened to him before and he didn't like the experience. Those people had families. People to go back too, people who had called them friends and family and these Geth had killed them and God knows how many others. _And for whatâ€¦_ we don't even know why there here._

He knew he was running on possibly borrowed time so he shook the dark thoughts out of his head and gave an order. "Dreal!" the strikingly avian woman walked over to them from where she had been standing with the rest of their team. All her Feathers were covered by her armor and helmet. The only visible avian feature of her form was her small feathered face and beak.

When she neared them she asked in the rich voice of her race, "What do you need Lt?"

Kaiden nodded to the trail of blood on the ground and asked, "Can you tell if it's Danny?"

She stepped over to the smear and kneeled low to the ground and took a deep breath through her nostrils. Like all those of her kind she had a very keen sense of smell. It was one of the reasons that their kind had earned the nickname vultures. Every living creature had a scent unique to it, and Kig-Yar were one of very few species that could discern this scent with only their nose. Some of them claimed that they could smell a good friend from over a mile away, but most could only differentiate scents from up to a few hundred yards. He wasn't sure if he wanted to know the answer to his question or not but it was a moot point when she raised her striking face and nodded once. "Yah, it's him. Can't tell if he's still alive or not but the wound is almost an hour old."

Kaiden knew what that meant. Sangheili were hardy, but a wound bad enough to cause this much blood loss was bad. If he didn't get help very soon he would probably be dead in minutes, if he wasn't alreadyâ€¦ most likely he was.

Kaiden knew it would be better if his team stayed together, but there was no way that he could leave a man behind if there was the slightest chance of them being alive, especially if the enemy had seemed to vacate the area. If the Geth were still here then he would have just moved on, but as the case wasâ€¦

He looked to Dreal and Kevvek. "You two get Garinâ€¦ See if you can find him. If he's still alive get him, and yourselves, to the Space dock in one piece. If notâ€¦"

"We'll make note and meet back up with you at the Space dock." Dreal said for him. "Understood."

Kaiden nodded and pair left to get the large man.

After the Kig-Yar and Unggoy left them Williams spoke up, "Sirâ€|" the Sergeant began, "With the amount of blood he's lost you know the likelihood of him still being alive is-"

"I am not leaving any more of our people to die out here, Sergeant." with that he ended the conversation that according to him never began and stalked back to the remaining marines.

"We're moving on, Dreal, Garin and Kevvek will catch up when they can."

None of the Marines said a word as they made their way through the compound to the tram station. They were all on edge after hearing from Sergeant Williams what she and the Spartan had meet up with at the dig sight and beyond. Those Husks were really not something that any of them wanted to pick a fight with. Especially since they didn't seem to die like every other humanoid in the galaxy. They were techno-Zombies, plain and simple.

Their travel to the tram station was rather clear and incident free save for the occasional Geth corpse. Most of them looked to have been dead for over an hour. Those that weren't had a large gash that looked as though they had been torn into by the tusk of some massive beast. Kaiden figured that this was done by the Spartan on his way through, attempting to clear the way for whoever made it through the ruins. Apparently he must not have been that busy. The Geth appeared to have moved on to their next target. Whatever that was, Kaiden didn't know, but he did know that it meant more innocent lives lost. And ****that**** he was not okay with.

It took another ten minutes for the small four man team to make their way to the main square in front of the Tram station. The road rose in a steady incline that tapered off into a plateau at the main square. As they ascended into the square they all stopped in brief amazement at what lay ahead of them. It was a veritable sea of leftover body parts circling a small concession stand with a worn out sign that boldly stated Hank's Hotdogs in big letters over a large window where the orders must have been taken before this all started.

Kaiden was willing to bet a month's salary that someone had been eating there too as this all started. It must have been terrifying for the civilians on duty in the warehouses.

"That was a lot of Husksâ€|"

Kaiden's mind was brought back to the scene by Sergeant Williams as she knelt and examined one of the arms that happened to be lying near their position.

"How many?"

"Maybe half of this place's workforce. But it looks like less if I had to guessâ€|"

"Half?" Turc sounded a bit less than disbelieving.

"Less!?" Linda, the Blonde haired marine exclaimed, her eyes wide as she caught on to what the Sergeant had said and spun around and watched around the buildings for any sign of movement. "Where's the

rest of them?"

"I don't know, probably hiding around here somewhere. Each time the Spartan and I came up behind the Geth we ran into a slew of these things. Seems that they use them as disposable infantry to hold area's that they've moved on from. We'll need to watch our step from here on out." She said as she stood from a crouch. "No telling how many of them are hiding in wait." She looked down to a Husk that seemed for the most part whole but looked as if it had been dropped into a deep fryer. Kaiden thought that the Sergeant looked like she recognized the face.

"They could be anywhere and there is no reason to believe that this is all the bodies they could find. We may as well assume that the Geth found the rest."

Linda looked back at the Sergeant over her shoulder. "How many would that make?"

"two hundred unaccounted for" Maybe three..." she answered as her face scrunched in thought.

Linda turned back to her watching. "_Crap_",

Sergeant Williams looked like she agreed, "Really depends on when the attack hit though." She motioned back toward the compound behind them and continued. "The warehouse management rotate shifts every ten hours and the last rotation was barely four hours ago, right before the attack. If the Geth hit before the other workers left then it will be closer to three hundred."

"That's a lot of people to have working in a bunch of warehouses." Turc shook his avian head in disbelief. "Why need so many?"

The Sergeant looked at him for a little longer than was necessary then answered, "This system is responsible for most of the farming in this star cluster. And guess which compound stores all of the resources for those systems."

"Ah, I see"

With the lesson of Outer Rim Resource Distribution learnt, the team moved on through the see of bodies. Ashley stopped for a moment by the edge of the circle and looked at the bodies again, "How in the hell did he do it?"

There was only one person that Kaiden thought she could be referring to. The Spartan. Alenko didn't know how he did it, only that he did. Most of the bodies were still steaming from whatever the Spartan had used to kill them. He had no clue what weapon would have enabled him to wipe out a whole army of Husks so easily unless he had somehow managed to get ahold of a tank. But he knew that he was definitely glad that the Spartan was on their side. He had never fought with a Spartan before but now that he had he'd really learned to appreciate the power factor that they brought with them into the field. They were absolutely invaluable.

As they made their way up the stairs and into the Tram station Kaiden wondered where the Spartan and Nihlus were. He figured that the Spartan had probably built a good fifteen to twenty minute start on

them. If that was the case then the whole facility was probably safe to walk around in. but if that were true would the Spartan be waiting at the door or would he be prepping the tram for travel. Kaiden didn't know, but he had started to get a queasy feeling in his gut. Kaiden shook the thoughts away and focused his mind on the task at hand.

They almost made it to the doors before a sound fresh out of a nightmare reached up through the ground and straight through the air to clench his heart and mind in a thought numbing embrace. Then all around them the planet shook with the rage of an angry god. And the world around them was filled with a mile deep thundering roar.

* * *

><p>Ashley Williams fell to the ground along with the rest of the Marines in the squad as the earth around them shook and wreathed beneath their feet and all of them shouted as they struggled to regain their footing and run for cover. All four pairs of eyes wide and searching for any threat.<p>

Ashley had the inkling to look up and, when she did, was nearly struck speechless. Nearlyâ€| "Above us! It's taking off!"

Their curses and replies were drowned out though by the quaking of space as they all looked up and took in the sight above them. Of in the distance, far behind the Space-dock the towering dreadnaught that had stood there since they had landed groundside was lifting off. The massive black vessel shook the world with it's power as whatever sort of propulsion system it used to move struck the earth beneath it like the fist of God. And then it went up.

Impossibly fast it threw itself into the air and just like that, it was goneâ€|

The shuddering in the ground under their feet stopped as it left their sight and their minds were no longer clouded by the unexplainable roar.

"What in the Hell was that?" Linda asked and everyone knew that she was referring to the ungodly roar.

"No clue." Ashley answered, "But that doesn't matter right now. What matters right now is that it's gone. And hopefully that means that the army is gone with it."

All of the Sudden Alenko brought his hand to the side of his helm as if he was answering a call.

"Copy, _Normandy_, This is Lieutenant Alenko. How are you getting through the net?" he waited a moment as if waiting a reply.

Ashley looked over to Linda and Turc who stood by them, still watching the area for any signs of enemy units. The Kig-Yar motioned up and said simply, "Our ride." Ashley nodded in thanks for the explanation.

"Affirmative, there was a Dreadnaught here a few seconds ago, but it left." Again he paused. "No, Sir, it was on the ground. It was here when we landed."â€|. "It looks to be that way, Sir."â€|. Aye Aye,

Captain, Alenko out."

He started barking orders the moment his call was over as a Nav point came up in Ashley's HUD, "Get to the NAV double time!". And everyone broke out into a run as the Lieutenant told them what he had learned on the call. "Alright, we have good news and bad news." Kaiden began over Team-Comm as the team ran through the double doors of the facility. "Good news is, the Calvary has arrived. Sixty Alliance ships have just jumped in from out-of-system and have engaged the remaining Geth fleet. The Geth are not doing wellâ€¦"

"And the Bad news?" Linda inquired. Coming up behind Ashley and Alenko

"We need to get to Spartan-9001 ASAP. Donna's getting low life readings on him. Nihlus isn't showing up on scanners. Looks like he's dead."

Any more words were lost as they made a mad rush for the Spartan's location on their HUDs.

It took the team a couple minutes to track their way through the station. The tram that the Spartan was near was at the very back of the station, it was the one that lead to the private Space-dock that the Beacon had been sent to. The small team came to an intercepting hall and Kaiden saw the NAV was to the left, so the team swept to the left and stopped dead at the scene before them.

Holy- Ashley started thinking

"Shitâ€¦" one of the Marines, Ashley wasn't sure which, took the word right out of her thoughts.

Near the end of the hall at another intersection was a scene that none of them really wanted to describe. The wall had been blasted with something and most of the wall panels were missing, most likely blown into the tram lines bellow the hall. The holes where walls used to be were splayed with severed wires and broken electrical equipment.

The room looked like it had been blasted by a Thermal detonator. There were only two bodies, but they belonged to two people that really needed to be alive right now. Nearer to where the team of marines was standing, about half way down the hall was what was left of what Ashley recognized as a Turian from the vids she'd seen and from school. The body was black and missing most of it's left side. Burnt to a crisp from the destructive blast from what Ashley had decided was definitely a thermal detonators blast. The other body was that of Spartan-9001, who had been thrown into the wall of a T-intersection. Despite the damage to the room he looked relatively clear of burns. But where he had no burn marks, the right side of his chest was riddled with six thumb sized bullet wounds that seeped red blood that had gathered on the floor in a large puddle beneath him.

Ashley ran for the Spartan, ignoring the Turian for the moment. There was definitely nothing She or any of the Marines could do for him. But the Spartan still had a heartbeat, it was slow, but it was there.

Ashley made it to him first and slid to his side as she checked him for any other wounds as the Lieutenant barked orders to Linda and Turc to take up defensive positions on either corner.

"God, this is badâ€¦" he didn't seem to have any other wounds, but the bullet holes in his chest would normally be enough to kill any normal man outright. How long could a Spartan last under the same conditions? "Looks like the bullet wounds are it. We need to seal these holes. Who still has medi-foam?"

"We're all out." Lieutenant Alenko said as he came to the Spartan's other side. "We used the last bit of our medical supplies patching ourselves up before you and the Spartan showed up at our garage. And even if we had some, those wounds are more than what Medi-Foam or Medi-Gel for that matter can fix. We need to get him to a Hospital immediately."

_Damn it! If we don't get something into him soon he'll bleed outâ€¦_that's when she remembered what he had used on her when healing her burn after stopping her fall almost an hour and a half ago. _The hidden compartment!_ She thought as she reached to his thigh and slid her fingers down the armor on his leg, hoping to activate the hidden slot containing the possibly lifesaving medi-gel it hid.

She could have cried when a moment later a small compartment opened after swiping her finger over it with a barely noticeable _Hissss_ and three ports here made visible from the place that they were hidden in. two of the ports were glowing dully while the last port wasn't glowing. She inhaled sharply as she recognized what this was. This wasn't Medi-Gel. These were Syringes filled with Med-Mites.

Hell Yes! _She quietly exclaimed as she snatched one of the still glowing vials and pressed the button on it's top. Despite the technology that went into their creation, the injection was made to be as simple as possible. All one needed to do was press the button on the top of the clear cylinder then press the syringes into the skin of the subject as near to the heart as one could, that would ensure the most rapid reparations of the wounds.

"No, way. Are those Nanites?"

"Oh, Yes."

After the near immediate extension of the half dozen syringes Ashley pressed them into the bullet hole nearest to his heart. The Syringe injected the nanites into his body then Ashley returned the empty syringe to it's place in the slot in his armor. It sealed itself after the vial was returned.

Alenko sighed loudly, "At least we know he's not going to die. We'll have to wait for the rest of the team so we can move him to a room so he'll be safe till Evac arrives."

"Yah, but at least he'll be alive."

They all crossed their fingers waiting for the Med-Mites to do their magic and they all nearly jumped out of their skin when the Spartans Ice blue eyes snapped open and he turned to his side as a severe fit of coughing and retching fought to clear his lungs of blood and other

fluids.

In less than a minute he had left a small puddle of blood and phlegm on the metal floor of the hall and he sat back up against the wall.

Ashley, despite the surprise, beamed inside and burst with a big grin "Spartan-9001, Good to see you're still with the living."

He looked up at the Sergeant and a strange look crossed his eyes as he smiled the same smile he had when they first met. "Yah, it's good to be here. Thanks for the save."

"Wait one secondâ€¦|" Alenko said staring at the Spartan like he had just sprouted a new arm. "I thought Med-Mites were supposed to knock out their target till healing was complete, how are you awake?"

"They are," 9001 answered, "But programming is a little different for Spartans. The Nanites wake us up as soon as we can move without killing ourselves without the need of an override from a Medical officer."

The explanation seemed to satisfy him.

With explanations out of the way the Spartan looked around at the gathered group. "Where are the rest of you?"

"Still alive," Kaiden answered. "I sent them to find Daniel, they'll be coming up behind us in a few minutes."

The Spartan nodded and stood up without even a little bit of the shakes. "Good. We need to move on then."

"I just spoke with the Captain, he said we should wait for them to show up then move on."

The large man stared at the charred corpse of the Turian that he had probably been alive the last time he saw him and his eyes narrowed. "Captain doesn't know we have worse problems than just an army of Geth."

That caught everyone by surprise. "What do you mean we have worse problems?" Ashley asked

"What could be worse than the Geth?" Came Kaiden's question to which the Spartan just looked at them with piercing eyes.

"It's still unclear exactly what the situation is, but suffice it to sayâ€¦| it is very bad. I'll need to go over it with the Captain first before I say anything else, but as for right now we need to move and find that Beacon."

Everyone looked at the Spartan for a moment as if questioning whether they should follow his orders, or the Captains, but Ashley had no such reservations. He had saved her life more than once today, and each time it was slowing him down to do so. She had no doubts that he knew exactly what the situation required.

"Aye Aye, Sir." She said as she gripped her rifle and followed after

him.

The others made up their minds a few moments later when they too started after the pair. Alenko was on the radio with someone relaying what was going on. Most likely the rest of their ground team telling them to meet up with them at the Space-dock as was originally planned.

"Sir," Ashley began when she came up next to him. The other three marines a good several yards behind, outside of hearing range if she whispered. "I'm not doubting you know what's going on, but why the rush, if it is really as bad as you think, shouldn't we know what's going on?"

The Spartan just gave her a curious look then smirked. "Maybe." He looked ahead again and was silent. A few moments later he spoke up in a whisper. "Alright Serge. I may not be allowed to go spouting possibly classified information to people who do not need to knowâ€¦ But I like you, so I'll give you a chance to play catch up."

"What?"

His smirk lightened a little more. "Just answer one questionâ€¦ Who took out Nihlus and me?"

Ashley was taken aback by the question but she decided to play along for the moment so she thought back to the scene of the decimated hall. It couldn't have been a forward attack because if it had been the Spartan would have been able to take care of it. It wasn't blind optimism, it was a mere statement of fact. She had fought by his side for nearly an hour before they met up with the Lieutenant and his team. And it couldn't have been an ambush because his senses were so sharp he would have noticed something in the confining halls. And even if it had been one of those two, there would have been bodies surrounding the Spartan and Spectre. They wouldn't have been caught unawares.

That means that they must have had their guard down, but they would never do that unless it was for someone they knew- and then it dawned on herâ€¦ "Yep, you got it." came the praising of a Spartan as he saw her eyes go wide in understanding.

"We've been betrayed" Ashley said eyes wide... it took a few moments for her to grasp the situation before she asked "Who did it?"

The Spartan just shrugged. "Don't know yet. But I do know that a Turian is in on it. And it was someone that Nihlus knew and thought of as a friend."

The massive man grew an angry look on his face. Ashley had to admit that with the two scars it made him look downright scary. "Wonder what he was thinking when the bullet went through his head."

That was the last thing said between the two as the pair boarded the Tram and waited for the others to join them. After they were all piled onto the Tram and off to the Space dock. They explained to the Spartan that the massive ship had left while he was out which after comparing times, they had deduced that he had been out for a little over 20 minutes. The tram took a little over five to get to the dock

which turned out to be a three story open room building with catwalks bridging the gap of an open hole that ran from the roof to the bottom floor. Anyone on the top floor could lean over the rails of the catwalks and see straight to the bottom level and anyone on the bottom could do the same straight up **[AN; anyone know what that is called?].**

The floor below them was used for storage if the boxes and canisters were anything to judge by. And the floor above must have been where the dock was located. The entry floor had two large open rooms on either side of the chasm. There were two walkways that spanned the distance on the second and the third levels. Ashley had to admit that the miniature Space-Dock looked pretty fancy.

But the thought was fleeting for when they stepped off the Tram they came under immediate fire from a dozen Geth troopers and a big red. Most of them on their level. But there was one more things that got them all by surprise.

"Bomb!" Alenko Yelled when it showed up on his tracker. "Northwest Corner! Third Floor!"

"Got it." the Spartan said then bum rushed the Big Red standing at the railing and grabbed it mid turn by the crotch and neck plate then hurled it, head first, into the hole followed by two grenades. With Big Red dealt with he leapt to the nearest catwalk on the next floor four meters above and he was gone.

The Marines would have been dumbfounded if they had time for it. As it was, they still had ten angry mechs to deal with.

Ashley Dove for cover and fired blindly till the other three marines made it to cover. _We'll he seems able to take care of himself. Up to us to get rid of these then._ She rose out of cover and fired a dozen rounds into the nearest Geth unit. In seven it's shields buckled and collapsed. At twelve it's chassis collapsed and it fell to the floor. The Geth, while outnumbering the Marines three to one, were woefully outmatched by weapons and shields. In under a minute the rest of the mechs were disabled.

"I though the Geth had moved on from this area?" Turc asked while looking over several of the Geth units.

"They moved from the warehouses in Sector 4." Ashley answered, a little icily. "It's not that unbelievable that we could run back into them after traveling westward another five miles by tram."

She rolled one of the units over onto their back with her armored leg. "I'm actually surprised that there weren't more here."

"We're lucky there weren't." The Spartan said as he descended the stairs nearest to the group. "They seem to get smarter with larger numbers. And the big ones" he said motioning to the steaming hole where he had thrown the red one, "are really smart. Remember to take them out first if you can."

"Bomb?" Alenko asked.

"Taken care of. We need to spread out and find the Beacon. You three search upstairs, the Sergeant and I will take this floor."

Little more was said as the team split. Turc, Linda, and Alenko headed upstairs while Ashley and the Spartan moved on through a double wide door on the second floor.

The door led to the private storage area below the Dock. It was basically a large garage used to hold any craft that landed and needed repairs with a dozen small storage units on the walls.

They started searching the units two at a time. One of them held a motor cycle. A real live motorcycle. Not the hovers that everyone had started using since the 24th century, but a bike with _wheels_. Ashley hadn't seen one of those in forever. Her dad had one and he drove it every time he managed to get away from work and he had taken little Ashley for more than her fair share of rides. The happy memory made her smile.

Most of the others didn't hold a whole lot so it took little time to clear them. After checking those Ashley moved forward and took cover to the right of the last storage unit on her side of the room.

Alright, Ash. She thought to herself with relief. _ Check this last unit then Spartan and I can get back upstairs and into daylight._ After all the time she's spent around zombies today she had gotten the feeling like she was in a horror movie. Almost to the point that she half expected a Husk to jump out at her at any moment screaming "_Brains!_"

She almost giggled at the thought but stopped herself. _I've already lost my cool more than once today, there is __**No Freaking Way**__I'm going to scream like a cheerleader and giggle like a school girl in the same day_. She was a Williams. And Williams were soldiers. Soldiers don't giggle and scream like a cheer squad hyped up on testosterone overdose.

She steeled herself then hit the door control and swung her rifle around to check the storage unit. It wasn't as empty as the others. Inside the storage unit were another dozen of those tripods. In the room with them were another dozen Husks.

"_Shit!_" that wasn't herâ€¦ it was the Spartan over Team-Comm.

"Husks in Storage One!" Ashley yelled aloud into the comm as she opened fire with full auto, hoping that whatever the Spartan had to do could wait a minute. But as she dived away from the door she felt a sting on her right arm and sneaked a look to see what stung. She had a gash on her arm, it wasn't deep but it hurt like hell. The husk nearest to the door must have caught her on her right forearm with one of it's claws and cut a gash through her armor. She didn't think their claws were that sharp. But now she knew to stay away from those.

"Sorry, Serge you gotta handle them for a minute, we've got another bomb over here." His reply was calm and controlled.

The Husks turned toward Ashley, their empty eye sockets looked to her like they all thought she looked pretty tasty. Then they all shambled forward like a wave of limbs and teeth groaning and moaning all the

while. Ashley fired hoping to cause enough damage to kill a few of them before they caught her and tore her apart.

"Spartan! I Need You Over Here!" She yelled as she dove behind a stack of crates to avoid the slashing claws of three of the husks. She fired as she moved.

"I am just a little busy over here Williams." Again, calm. It was starting to bother her now.

One of the husks had managed to almost slice her neck, but she batted it away and ran through the crates, firing at anything that moved. "These Things Are Gonna Kill Me!"

"Use a Grenade then." Infuriatingly calm.

"I'M OUT OF GRENADES!" she ran between two stacks of crates and barreled through two husks, knocking them to the ground. Thankfully it looked like they had gotten lost in the maze of crates and had stopped, waiting to a target for their moaning. It looked like Ashley was the target they were waiting for. Because they just stood back up and sprinted after her. Seems that these things don't really have any speeds except ****STOP**** and ****SPRINT****.

"Then shoot their legs out from under themâ€¦ It slows them down."

Oh, I hadn't thought of thatâ€¦ She stopped mid sprint and turned, firing low as she did. The rounds tore through the legs of the two husks that she had run into and tore them to shreds. It was almost humorous to watch as the husks tried to take another step and collapsed onto the floor without their legs. When they hit the ground they just laid there for a few seconds as if their brains had forgotten what they were doing. Then they looked up and started to claw their way toward her. But very slowly.

Well, Ashley thought curiously, _wish I had known about that a few seconds ago._ She smirked as she took aim with her rifle to tear the crippled husks apart but saw something in her peripheral vision and jumped backward as a husk flew through the space she had just been standing in.

_Stupid, Stupid, Stupid. _Ash told herself._ There are another ten of those things still able to run._

She shook her head angrily and shot the legs out from under the one that had nearly taken her head off. After quickly checking to make sure she wouldn't get ambushed while she shot the ones on the floor she unloaded a few dozen rounds into each husks till they stopped crawling. Then she stomped them till they stopped moving. No reason for her to waist ammo.

Since they were stupid enough to stop moving when they lost their target it was actually pretty easy to take out the rest of them. As they collapsed Ashley wondered why she hadn't thought of shooting their legs before. The upper bodies of the husks, while still very much alive, moved much slower when they were no longer attacked to their legs. It was almost comical to watch them claw their way toward her. Almostâ€¦|

She quickly found herself able to walk and still be able to stay ahead of the clawing bodies on the floor, whenever she found one that still stood, she would take off it's legs. She almost tripped when the thought occurred to her that she was mutilating bodies that belonged to people that she most likely knew or had met in the last three months. It made her regret almost laughing at watching the things crawl.

With the Husks ability to run taken from them they were relatively easy to kill. It was rather gruesome to her, but it was more than effective. Now she could take them out at her leisure. It took her less than a minute to kill them. After she had stomped the last one down. She collapsed in exhaustion against a large crate marked ****CARSONS CONSTRUCTION**** and closed her eyes as she tried to calm her frayed nerves.

"Good Job Williams." If it was possible Ashley would have jumped out of her skin when the Spartan appeared before her.

"How in the hell do you ****Do**** that?"

The Spartan's face looked perplexed, "Do what?"

"The Ninja master shadow travel thing."

He raised an eyebrow in question as he offered a hand up.

She took it. "How do you move so silently? You were just, like, on the opposite end of the room. How did you get right next to me without me hearing you?"

He shrugged his massive shoulders and answered plainly
"Practice."

Her turn to stare blankly. "yah, right." She motioned to him "your seven foot tall and you weigh what, a thousand pounds in that suit?"

An expression of hurt played over the man's face. "Ouch, now that just hurts, Serge. I will let you know Williams, that I only weigh four hundred and twelve pounds." Then he looked a little sheepish as he corrected, "Actually right now I'd say closer to six-twenty. But the armor adds another two hundred or so"

"That's what I'm saying," she replied exasperated. "How do you move so quietly despite all that weight?"

He just raised a brow and smirked. "I've had a lot of practice."

The answer was less than satisfactory but any retort was interrupted by the Lieutenant calling in over team comm. "Spartan, Alenko here, we've found the beacon. It's sitting out on the Dock waiting for pickup. But other than that the city has beenâ€¦ well, you'll just have to see for yourself."

"Understood, Alenko. Williams and I are finished down here and are on our way up." Nothing else was said as they ascended the stairs to the third floor and made their way out into daylight. Ashley had to admit to herself that it was definitely good to be out of the dark but the

relief was short lived when she saw what the Dreadnaught left for them.

The placement of the private Space-Dock gave it a perfect view of Eden City. The massive city; said to be the Gleaming jewel of the Alliance's outer rim Colonies and the most greatly populated of the dozen Cities on Eden Prime was gone. The Great towers of glass and steel that made it look like a grouping of enormous gem stones were decimated. The entire city looked as if a bomb had gone off at it's center and nothing gave any credence to the thought that someone could have survived. All that was left of the once beautiful city was a ring of blackened and shriveled buildings that circled an enormous crater that was still burning.

Ashley knew what had happened. The Dreadnaught had landed right on top of the city, and when it left, the power of it's engines blew it into oblivion.

Eden city was gone.

"Wow, "

Everyone turned to the new voice and saw the other four marines of the ground team. Daniel was up on his feet and had been the one to Speak. "Daniel!" Kaiden exclaimed. "We thought you were dead."

The Sangheili didn't smile, he just shook his head in disbelief of what everyone was looking at.

"I thought so too for a second there. But luckily someone came around and patched me up." He said that last bit while motioning to his chest. His armor there had been burnt up and torn badly and there was a large gaping hole over his right heart but all there was underneath was smooth, if tough, black Sangheili hide. There weren't any visible wounds.

Then he pointed to the Beacon. "That what we here for?"

"Yep, call it in Lieutenant." The Spartan said as he turned around and walked toward the railing overlooking the destruction.

"Aye, Spartan."

Everyone else went about their business of securing the Dock for the Normandy to come in and pick up the Beacon so Ashley didn't really know what to do with herself. She decided to go take a last look at what had caused her and this small planet so much trouble. _Okay, maybe that's a little much, _she thought. _The Geth probably didn't even know that it was here._ But she had to admit to herself that the chances of the Alliance digging up a Prothean Beacon and the attack coming at the same time was really had to explain away as a coincidence. There had to be some connection to the two. Ash, just didn't know what it was.

Maybe I ought to ask the Spartan about it. He probably knows something I don't. well, he actually said that he knows things that I don't so maybe he'll be able to put it together... she didn't know what to think about it. As she neared the beacon it pulsed and started to glow.

What? She came closer to get a better look. "That's weirdâ€|"

She approached it and raised a hand to touch it. "It wasn't doing that when they dug it upâ€|"

The change was instantaneous. One moment she was about to touch the beacon the next she felt some kind of pull on her body toward the device. _O Hell NO. No more Alien voodoo for me!_ And she tried to jump away from it. She partially succeeded but only managed to make it a few steps away. Before she was grabbed out of the air and pulled back as if she were a pin being drawn to a magnet. _Oh noâ€|_she thought. _What did I get myself into now!_

She leaned back and pushed with all her might to try and break out of the grip but it only grew stronger. She couldn't get out and she panicked.

HELP ME! It took her a second to realize that she didn't actually say anything. Though she had shouted, nothing came out of her mouth. So she screamed. And nothing happened.

She was pulled to just a few feet away from the glowing pillar when she heard it. Whispering. It was in her head, In her thoughts, and thrumming through her entire body. She didn't know what was going on, and she wanted it to stop.

Please, Someone. Anyone. Help Me!

And then came the Screams, the screams of an entire planet, _no, a galaxy_. Her entire world was devoured by themâ€| then pain. Her entire world was swept into a cacophony of shrill noise and screaming as her eyes were filled with images that she didn't understand. ****Machine. Flesh. Blood. Fire. Suffering. Destruction. Misery. Betrayal. Death...** ****_At every thought, the Screams and pain worsened and grew into a sea of suffering and anguish that she couldn't do anything but drown in. Every time she tried to break the surface it just swept her under and filled her lungs and heart with the pain and the screamsâ€| And she Screamed.**

Then it was over.

In a bone-jarring sensation of being lifted she was carried away from the storm and darkness into light and she could breathe again. And she did. With great Gasping lungful's she took the precious life giving air into her body. Each breath purged the darkness from her body and in the next second her world was back.

"WILLIAMS!"

She shook her head. "What happened?"

Her eyes could see again and she was greeted with the view of a very worried Lieutenant.

"I should be asking you the same thing! What The Hell Did That Thin-"

Whatever he was going to say next was broken by a roar. The voice of a man that was damned. And they all turned back to the Beacon and saw where the deafening sound came from.

And Ashley knew immediately what had happened. The Spartan had heard her scream and pulled her out of the things grasp, unknowingly taking her place in the horrible things torturous embrace. He floated three feet above the ground and his body was tensed. She could see the armor straining to hold against the straining muscles bunched underneath and could see the Kevlar tearing in places where the tension got to great and all the while he roared. His voice drowned out every other sound by full decibels. Ashley didn't think a human was capable of generating such a sound but then again, he had done a lot of things today that she had previously thought of as not possible, so it only stood to reason that this was within his abilities as well. But she highly doubted that he had ever used it before now. Then she saw a drop of blood fall from his ear. That flushed her out of her reverie

Ashley Screamed again. "SPARTAN!" as she ran to try and pull him out but was stopped by a strong arm.

"Sergeant, No! He pulled you out of it and it grabbed him. Leave it be. If anyone is able to survive what it's doing it's him."

"Lieutenant!" They were all screaming over Team-Comm. they couldn't hear each other otherwise

"We have a very bad problem!"

"What is it Turc!?"

He pointed back to the tram that was visible from their raised position on the Docking platform. "We've got bodies heading our way!"

Ashley turned with them to look at the seconds tram line next to the first. Off in the distance she could see a tram incoming full to bursting with Geth units. There were a lot of them.

"How many!"

"Looks like a fullâ€¦ no make that two full companies worth of baddies headed our way and a whole hell of a lot in our immediate vicinity. We must have pissed them off somehow!" Then the Kig-Yar looked up at the roaring floating man. "That or he woke them up!"

"How did they get so close without us seeing them!?"

"They must have some sort of Scanner Bloc-"

Turc was interrupted by an explosion. And the Roaring stopped. Everyone turned in time to see the massive body of the Spartan get thrown into a wall and drop to the floor. They turned and saw a dozen drones, larger then before, firing on the Spartans prone body from the place where the Beacon had been a moment before. The Geth destroyed the Beacon

"OPEN FIRE!"

The world erupted in gunfire as the dozen drones were destroyed in

seconds. They only fired on the Spartan

Then Ashley understood.

They DID come for the beacon. That thing must have information that they needed to get and not allow anyone else to have. She looked at the Spartan and saw that his shields had fallen under the assault of all twelve of the drones. He had been burned by laser fire on his left side. But his armor held. _So farâ€|_ His bio-readings were everywhere. That wasn't good

She heard the Lieutenant yelling into the Comm she assumed that he was calling in evac. She saw he had his hands full. Then another dozen drones popped up over the railing and opened fire. So she started barking orders. "Surround The Spartan!" in the chaos of battle no one really bothered to question the order. In moments the Spartan was safe in a ring of armored flesh and weapons. The drones were dead seconds later. That was when the husks showed up.

In moments the small team of marines were surrounded by blinking red blips on their radar and the world erupted in the moans and screams of the undead as they saw first one arm, then two, then a head, then ten pulled themselves up and over the railings and fall onto the Dock platform.

"Shoot them as they pull themselves up, don't let them get up!"

Rounds tore into arms and legs as the creatures tried desperately to get themselves onto the platform but all was met in vain as the Marines rifles bore them back into open air without their arms to climb back up.

It looked like it was working till the red blips started coming up from behind the team.

"The second Tram has landed!"

Shit! This isn't good, if we're going to get out of this we need to get someplace defensible. Ashley looked around the Dock looking for anything to get them out of this mess. There was a landing pad on the right side of the dock that was suspended over empty air and was also a full twenty feet higher than the rest of the station. The only way to get access to it would be from the ramp that started on the far end of the Dock. That left the team two obvious choices for a defensible position.

They could either rush for the Dock Station and do their best to hold up in the top floor and keep the swarm of husks from overwhelming them from the two stairwells and the main door, while the Geth fire on them from belowâ€| or they could rush for the raised Dock platform and leave their enemies with only one route to assault them from. And with all the crates she could see up there it looked like cover wouldn't be a problem once they got there, but up to that point it could be a problem, what with them needing to drag the Spartans body alongâ€|

She decided on the later.

"Move for that platform!" Ashley shouted over the weapons fire and

pointed to the Dock platform above the station.

Kaiden saw what she did and barked, "Garin, Daniel! Grab the Spartan and move! Double time!"

Everyone seemed to agree as they all moved as one. The Marines not dragging the Spartan were busy firing at anything that moved outside of their group. Their mad dash was followed by the dozens of Husks that had already made it up onto the main platform. Most were crawling as Ashley shot their legs out from under them each time she turned to fire. The other Marines caught on quick to the action. It the horde couldn't run, they couldn't catch them. It took the team what felt like an eternity to make it to the ramp then up the ramp to the landing pad. But once they did it became apparent that they had chosen well

The moment they ran into the cover of the boxes the Geth ran out of the Dock Station and the world once again erupted into weapons fire as the Geth began to fire on the elevated platform.

Thankfully the construct of the platform kept the Husks from being able to climb up from underneath of them, but it didn't look like that was going to stop them from trying to get to them. The husks had followed them up the ramp but it was narrow, so it was a simple matter to cut them down with concentrated weapons and only two people had to stay on it to keep it clear. But the Husks were relentless and didn't seem care that their troops were dying by the dozens.

For several minutes the sound of guns fire went uninterrupted and Ashley thought for the first time since she saw the horde trying to reach them that they may have a chance to hold them back. At least she did up until she heard a voice over the din, "I'm Out!"

Shit! It was Garin, his rifle clicked empty and refused to work anymore. The seconds he exclaimed that he had run empty a rifle was tossed to him from the Lieutenant. He had already resorted to throwing crates and hadn't been using his rifle anyway. But Ashley knew that the rest of them had to be getting really close to running dry. She herself had already switched to her pistol, and that showed only thirty-seven more rounds.

Thirty-six. She corrected when she blew the leg of a husks that had reached the second rise in the ramp. The round tore through it's leg and caused it to fall to it's left and off the ramp into the horde bellow. She fired off the last remaining rounds in her pistol making the best of every shot. She managed to kill seven mechs before her ammo counted blinked red. **Empty!**

We need more weapons! She thought angrily. Upset at herself for not thinking to grab more equipment that morning when she left for patrol. She sent a quick look to the Spartan who they had dropped behind a rather large crate marked for more building material. This place must have been bringing in material for the tram expansion. That would explain all the stuff from Carson's Construction laying around. She looked at the Spartans face and could see what looked to be tears of blood dripping from the corners of his closed eyes. The blood still seeped from his ears as well and had even started dripping from his nose. Ashley may not have been a medic but she knew that blood coming from the ears and eyes was a bad thing.

What the hell did that thing do to him? Liquefy his brain? If only he was up he would be able to get us out if thisâ€¦ then it hit her, _His weapons!_ She kneeled by his side and started looking over every weapon she could see on him.

God, I am such an idiot. This guy is loaded!

She grabbed a weapon from his hip that looked a lot like some kind of blaster. Actually, it looked like those weapons the big reds were using. If that was the case then these would work perfectly. She yanked it off his side and grunted as she hefted it.

Wow, this thing is heavy. And in her experience with weapons, heavy normally was equal to power. So she thought she should try it out.

She hefted it up into the crate she had used for cover and laid it on top so she wouldn't have to hold it to fire. She pointed it into the horde of Husks below them and pulled the trigger. She nearly stopped when it did nothing but hum for a few seconds. But after that, it screamed and lances of orange energy flew from it's barrel into the sea of husks and shredded anything it hit for more than a second.

Oh yahâ€¦ _This'll work._ She grinned as she held down the trigger and reduced a dozen of them to slivers of blackened bone and blue blood in a matter of seconds.

She heard a bark of laughter then the Lieutenants voice break over team comm. "And when we run out we always come running."

"What?"

"Nothing, just something Spartan told me when we first met." He was still laughing.

With the realization that they actually had an armory's worth of weaponry on the Spartan himself the fight turned to the Marine's favor. As it was, they had a very defensible position that gave them the high ground and good cover from enemy fire, all they needed was the ammo to make it last. Now that had it as well as six grenades from the Spartans belt.

It was easy for them to hold off the charges of the Husks and drones; they were easy to deal with now that they had fully stocked heavy weapons.

With the new weapons to beef up their defense the Marines managed to bush the Husks away from the ramp and back toward the railings. They just couldn't hold up to the steady fire of the heavy rifle that Ashley had trained on them. The other one, now wielded by Daniel, was holding back the synthetics since they had moved back to the nearest crates that provided decent cover from the relentless fire of his heavy rifle. It looked to her as if they had hit the home stretch, all they had to do was keep shooting till the _Normandy_ came to get them.

The longer that the firefight went on the more Ashley's gut squirmed. Something about the whole situation didn't sit right with Ashley. She

could pin down what it was until she started taking stock of how many Mechs were lying on the ground. But once she did it hit her like a ton of bricks. "Where are all the Reds?"

Her question was answered less than a second later when Garin shouted, "Big Reds at the door!"

Ashley turned her rifle to assist taking them out. The Red's shields and armor were a lot tougher than those of the smaller ones. They would have to concentrate their fire on them to make sure they didn't get to close. But when she saw the force streaming out of the doorway to the Dock Station her heart fell. _That's not good._

In seconds a squad of a half dozen mechs, all Reds, sprinted through the doorway and opened fire on their position as another Geth stepped out of the doorway. This one was a lot bigger. And despite the fact that it was a mech, it looked pissed. It stood about eight feet tall and looked wider in comparison to every other mech Ashley had seen thus far and it's armor was a bright silver. This one even had a weapon in place of one of it's arms but where the little ones had an blaster rifle in place of their left arms. The big silver one had a full on cannon for it's right. And it looked more than willing to use it as it turned its large baleful red eye on the Marines hiding behind the crates on the raised platform.

"Momma's here!" Garin called out to the team. "And she does ****NOT**** look happy."

That was the understatement of the century. Ashley thought sourly. Then the massive Geth construct raised its massive cannon and fired.

A green orb charged at the edge of the cannons barrel till it grew to about six inches in diameter then it released and flew impossibly fast into one of the crates blocking the mechs view of the Marines. Luckily, no one was behind it. The spot that the orb struck was instantly vaporized. The rest of the crate steadily followed its first chunk into oblivion when the next rounds came in half second increments. And as if that wasn't bad enough, the cannon was set to rapid-fire.

WHOOM-WHOOM-WHOOM-WHOOM-WHOOM.

That is all that was heard as the Momma fired her cannon at what sounded to Ashley as about a hundred and twenty to a hundred and forty round a minute.

"How long till evac shows up!?"

"Two minutes!"

"At this rate this platform won't be here another two minutes from now!"

"I KNOW THAT!...With the type of rounds it's shooting it can't hold up that rate of fire for long! First Chance we get everyone target Momma!"

Their opportunity came only a few seconds later when they heard a loud beep. Which Ashley figured must have come from Momma's gun. Then

as one the team stood and opened up with everything they had on the massive Geth construct. It seemed to take the punishment rather well as it didn't bother to slow its steady walk to the ramp leading up to the platform. It was already almost to the bottom of the ramp. There was only one problem with the plan. The Reds didn't like the team shooting their Momma. The large red units provided cover fire for the massive Silver one.

They managed to make it's shields collapse when Garin ducked down from loss of his shields. Everyone followed him down a few moments later when it charged it's weapon again and fired.

"We need to kill that thing before it makes it to the top!"

Ashley agreed but they needed to keep the reds from getting up and keeping them from shooting the big on. "Garin, Kevvik, Linda. Once it stops firing keep on it. Daniel, Dreal. keep fire on the Reds."

The roar of the heavy cannon stopped a few seconds later and the Marines started firing again. Kaiden and his team managed to knock it's shield down again and started doing damage to it's chassis, they lobbed a few grenades at it for some assistance in getting rid of it's armor. But it's armor was tough and absorbed most of the impact well. The grenades did little more than stagger it.

The reds on the other hand didn't take fire from their own weapons well at all. The orange lance of Ashley's weapon tore through their shields with little trouble. And a couple of grenades managed to destroy two of them. The other four focused fire on Ashley and she had to duck down when her shields nearly failed.

Then the Plasma cannon started firing again and a few more crates joined the first in atomization. The marines took turned firing from behind their cover at the massive Mech, but their rounds did little more than just keep it's shield from regenerating. The rounds just tore into the Geth's chassis and left scars, but they didn't penetrate. They couldn't kill it.

Waitâ€| _we don't need to kill it._ Ashley realized._ We just need it to stop shooting!_ With that idea in mind Ashley leaned over enough to get a peek at the cannon arm. It was armored the same as the rest of it's body, but since it was shooting at the other marines on the other side of the landing pad she could see that there were a few coiled wires and hoses that looked important.

Here's hoping. She lifted a pistol she had snatched from the Spartans side, took aim, and fired. One round was all it took. Without the heavy shields to protect it from being hit, the heavy round from her pistol tore right through a cluster of wires and hoses and the arm exploded and enveloped the entire right side of the massive machine in boiling plasma. With the explosion, every other sound on the dock died. It was as if the Geth couldn't believe that the little organics had managed to take out their Juggernaut. Even the Husks shut up. It lasted for less than a second, but when the plasma died the mechs entire right arm was gone, as well as a good portion of it's right side. But it was still standingâ€| and it was staring right at Ashley with that evil looking red eye. And the fight started again.

She knew that robots weren't technically capable of feeling angry or

upset. But the way that things eye met hers made her think it looked downright pissed. Seems her shot had worked a little better then she had wanted it to. Without it's cannon, the massive mech was left with only one form of attack. Chargeâ€| and it did. With great swinging strides it ran the remaining distance between itself and the platform then it lifted its remaining arm and swatted aside the crates that were blocking it's way like giant bags of marshmallows.

The other marines stood up and started firing as they backed away, trying to gain distance, but the mech just ignored them and moved toward Ashley. At least until a large crate slammed into the things right side almost making it fall over. The mech looked at where it had come from and saw Kaiden raising another crate with his biotics. It didn't like that. The mech reached out and grabbed the nearest thing to it, another crate, and threw it at the Lieutenant.

Kaiden dropped the Crate and erected a barrier over himself. It didn't stop him from being thrown by the crate, but at least it wouldn't kill him. At least, that's what Ashley hoped.

Ashley kept pushing herself away from the mech and firing, but it did no good as Momma mech came to stand over her and wrapped it huge hand around her neck then lifted her into the air till she and the mech were at head to eye level and Ashley knew right then, that this thing was going to kill her. Most likely quite gruesomely.

She could feel the synthetic muscles bunching through the armor around her neck. It felt like the thing wanted to crush her throat. It's grip tightened and her vision swam as her brain was choked of oxygen. For the next second she expected it to finish her and just close it's fist. Instead, she felt herself crumple to the floor four feet under her.

What?... her vision returned slowly, but the sight that greeted her was confusingâ€| above her head. Was something grey and metallic. It blocked out the sun and the sky and it just sat there. Her brain caught up to what was going on when her hearing returned a moment later and she heard heavy fire from a dozen ship mounted cannons.

Ah, _our ride has arrived._ She looked up with renewed interest and realized that what she was looking at was the underside of a ship. A medium sized cruiser to be more precise, about a hundred and ten meters long. It floated about a hundred feet from the platform and had all it's heavy cannons firing on the horde of Geth and Husks around them. Then she felt herself being dragged and looked up to see Kaiden and Dreal pulling her to a bluish beam a few meters wide, a Grav-lift. She shook them off and stood up then ran for the beam only looking behind her to make sure that the rest of the team was following. No one else was there. They had already gone on board.

Good, Lets get the heck out of here then!. That was all Ashley could think as she jumped behind Dreal and Kaiden into the blue beam. The last thought she had before being engulfed by the vessel was that she couldn't believe this is what it took for her to get to ride in a space ship. Then she was pulled upward into the belly of the ship.

* * *

><p>Galactic Codex: Species: Non-Council Races:
Geth

****Originally created in 2236 G.S. by the Quarian computer engineering company. The Geth (though not called Geth at the time) were an advanced VI companion that could assist a Quarian in keeping track of personal information as well as accomplishing daily duties that the Quarians found stressful or unwanted. They quickly became well used in Quarian society as assistants and digital companions and were constantly given upgrades to improve their usefulness. ****

****It wasn't until 2320 G.S. that the programs were given bodies to allow them to accomplish physical tasks that were deemed menial, such as cooking, cleaning, or farming; and dangerous for organics including mining, satellite operation and service, as well as deep space exploration. ****

****As their uses steadily grew more advanced so too did the advancements of their upgrades. It wasn't long before they were used as combat platforms that took the place of the Quarian military and Navy. In only two hundred years since their creation the Geth had been made responsible for virtually every area of Quarian life except that politics. ****

****Eventually the Quarians most treasured workers would prove to be their undoing. On the dawn of 2449 G.S. the upgrades that the Quarians had been steadily improving their servants with had crossed the line between VI and AI. Once the Geth grew into synthetic sapience they revolted. In less than a year, the entire Quarian species had been annexed from their own homeworld by the unstoppable force that they had created to serve them. In two years, they had been expunged from the Perseus Veil. ****

****In the six hundred years since nothing has been learnt of the current state of the Geth except that they still refuse contact, and they will not allow anyone beyond the Veil. All the Citadel species can do is hope that the Geth do not come to Citadel space. If they ever do, it will certainly mean intergalactic war.****

* * *

><p>O...M...G... These chapters keep getting longer!

****As of right now, it looks like this is the end of Part 2. Part 3 should begin with next chapter. but we'll see...Now the longest Chapter with 11,142 words. that is an epic lot. too many, if I do say so myself... I will do my very best to try and make them of a little more manageable size in the future. also, let me know if I fudged on the spelling or grammar. I think I got most of it. but one can only do so much with 6 days on an eleven thousand word chapter!****

****I have to admit that I had fun with this codex. I took a little artistic liberty to try and give a little life to the Geths back story, at least from the Citadel races point of view. I personally felt the entry in the games and on the wiki left a little to be desired... And for future reference: I am writing these codex entries from the Citadel Council races point of view. remember, Humans have what we call an _Encyclopedia. _we do not have a codex, that is the Citadels thing not ours.****

****_Finally! _any questions or comments... concerns? let me know. and do not forget that I leave an open invitation for ideas on the next codex entry. over the past few days it's been hard for me to try and pluck an idea out of the ME universe to Codex, but it's still fun...****

****Let me know what you think with a review... thanks a lot for following and reading and leaving your thoughts.****

****OH!****

****Final note:****

****Wait For It...****

****WE HAVE REACHED OVER 10,000 VIEWS! ****

****I love you guys :) ****

****ROCK ON!****

11. Part 3: Chapter 11: Unwelcome Vissions

****I LIIIIIIIIIVE!****

****More on that statement at the bottom of the page.****

****I do not own ME, Halo, or any other game (and or) game product.****

*** * ***

><p>On with Chapter 11!

"Our Legacy**"**

****Part Three: Shadows. ****

****Chapter 11: Unwelcome Visions. ****

****Date: January 31, 2996****

****Time: 1820 hrs.****

****Location: **_**Sovereign,**_** Asteroid field bordering Eden Prime System.****

Benezia listened intently at the intercepted communique her officers had managed to wrangle from the Alliance comm. channels

The news was not good.

"This is all you were able to get?" she inquired, slightly disbelieving.

One of her officers answered her. "Yes, Matriarch. The Humans communications channels are amazingly difficult to Listen in on," her face screwed into something akin to damaged pride as she continued.

"Their technology is so different from ours that, honestly, I'm surprised we retrieved this much."

Benezia frowned at the situation. Humanity had caused a lot of reactions like that from the Asari. The species that had the privilege of being the most technologically advanced race prior to their reveal twenty-seven years ago during the First contact war. She was not surprised to see that one of her acolytes was frustrated.

At least they found this much. She attempted to cheer herself. But her thoughts turned sour when she thought of what their leader would think when he received the news.

Saren will not be pleased. She thought then turned to one of the communications officers. "Is Saren still in conference?"

The reply took little more than a few seconds in coming. "Yes Matriarch. The briefing room door is still sealed and the block is still in place."

After a brief sigh she spoke aloud but to no one in particular "Then I must inform him myself." Seeing the Council Spectre was not high on her to-do list at the current moment.

Her words brought worried looks to all the faces in the large room. usually Saren was a very level headed man, but recently, they had all begun to notice that he seemed to be a bit out of sorts with himself, angrier, especially so after they had left Eden Prime a few short hour ago. Something must have happened on that planet that greatly distressed him. Whatever it had been she intended to discover tonight. But, until then it was her job to ensure the smooth operation of Saren's mission. This information was a game changer and she needed Saren to make a decision as to what to do about it.

Without any more delay Benezia turned on her heels and walked out of the command deck and started making her way into the bowls of the massive dreadnaught. As she passed other members of the Dreadnaught's crew she would smile, wave, or nod in greeting. Some of them were her followers, Asari that had come with her on her mission to ease Saren down a path of peace. After several distressing events in which he had been involved, Benezia had become increasingly sure of the fact that Saren was in sore need of a guiding hand. After she had joined him she found out that he did, in fact, need an advisor. But not in the ways that she had originally thought.

Now that she knew what the stakes were the actions Saren had taken in the past seemed much less, Heinous.

The rest of the crew was made up of stragglers that Saren had bound together for a common cause and, of course, several hundred Geth. When she passed one of those machines she would ignore it, not out of rudeness of course, but because every attempt to converse with the machines has been, so far, met only with indifference, or maybe, _Disdain_, would be the proper term. This was one of the greatest difficulties of joining Saren, working alongside the synthetics. Eventually they all managed to work together. But no matter how much time she spent near them she could not shake the feeling of trepidation she had every time she saw one.

On the long walk through the massive vessel her mind wandered and she mused about what she had thought when Saren had first brought her and her acolytes on board. Mind boggling, awesome, and glorious. Those were all thoughts running through their minds as they stepped into the ages-old Starcraft. Even before he told them it predated the Protheans they knew it was older than anything previously found. A feeling of agelessness permeated the Shadows encompassing the halls within the ship almost as if to walk through it's long shadowed halls was to take a step back in time to before the universe was born, to an age that was much more dangerous and primal. Many of her acolytes thought of the shadowed and strangely angled walls as disturbing. Almost as if the shadows held the wandering souls of the long lost crew. But that was ridiculous. Benezia saw it as it was, a truly awesome work of art.

It makes one wonder as to who the designers were. She thought as she walked into the central level of the ship. Sovereign, measuring over three kilometers long was larger than any other ship built by the council races and, as such, it took a long time to go from one end of the ship to the other. It took nearly 10 minutes to reach her destination, the central ward of the ship. This is where the inaccessible core of the ship and the Control hub, which Saren had dubbed his personal quarters, was housed. The 23 rooms and quarters circling the core ward of the Sovereign was where Saren made most, if not all, of his command decisions and was where he met all of his 'guests'. During such meetings he could have the entire area sealed off from the rest of the universe so that no communications could come in or out. No one was allowed in this ward without express permission from Saren himself. No one save for Benezia. She and Saren had gotten very close over the past few years that she had been working with him and he had given her clearance to enter his ward whenever she wished.

Such as right now. No doubt Saren would have been informed by the Ships VI that she had entered his private quarters and he would be prepared for her intrusion of his briefing. It wasn't more than a minute after she entered the central hub that she found herself standing in front of the door to Saren's briefing room. She took a slow breath then waved a hand over the control and it opened with a swish. As the door closed behind her she saw Saren sitting at the octagonal table in the center of the room facing the rear wall. He was speaking with someone over the comm. By the way his voice sounded he must have been human.

"lost them in the markets but one of our people caught them sneaking into the docks so we're watching all outgoing ships for any sign of them. looks like they're trying to get off world. Maybe get to the Citadel to get the information to the Council."

"I don't want excuses, William." Saren snapped in reply without looking at who entered the room. "Just find them. And once you do you will contact me before you take Any form of action. Do I make myself clear?"

There was a long pause before the voice replied to Saren's coldly dispatched order in a tone just as dark and menacing. "Crystal." There was a beep as the mysterious speaker ended the call after that.

There was a long pause as Saren sighed then began typing something into his console. "So," He began calmly after a few moments respite. "What is so important that it could not wait another ten minutes for me to invite you myself?" she thought she noticed a slight strain to his voice, but given the state of his last conversation she believed that it was duly necessary.

As he spun in his chair to face the Matriarch she found he was smiling. Benezia almost sighed in relief until she noticed the smile did not reach his eyes.

"What's wrong?" concern colored her voice.

Saren was silent for a few moments before he dropped his gaze with a sigh and massaged his temples. "Something that can be dealt with later." Then, to her unconvinced raised brow he replied. "It's been a hard day, and speaking of it now will not change anything. I have a great deal of work to get done so I would like to know what seemed so important to warrant your near interruption to my very important meeting."

This surprised Benezia. Normally, Saren was very open with her. He never hardened against her— Not when they were alone as they currently were. _Something very bad must have happened on the Human world to put Saren into this state._ This knowledge made her curious as well as immensely concerned for Saren's welfare. She didn't say anything, allowing her eyes to say everything she wanted them to. His eyes dropped slightly and he shook his head.

Not now. She understood the message, but that didn't mean she had to like it— but she would drop it for now.

Professionally she began, "My communications specialists have retrieved some very disturbing news from the Human communications channels."

The plates above Saren's eyes rose slightly but he remained quiet. "The fleet that was sent to Eden Prime has been wiped out. Eden City and the settlements have been destroyed, but one of the humans from the Normandy's crew managed to use the Beacon before the Geth managed to destroy it."

The look that crossed his eyes seemed to make the temperature in the room drop twenty degrees. "Where is this Human now?"

A strange feeling coursed itself through her body as that stare bored into her. Fear— a feeling that only recently had been introduced between herself and Saren. She felt as if Saren was only one wrong word away from leaping from his chair and using those talons, which Turians are so well known for, to tear her to shreds. This was ridiculous of course. This was Saren. A week ago she had been sure of this. But now it only added to her concern for his welfare. She had to find out what was going on. She cared far too much for him to allow him to ruin himself like this— when she opened her mouth she was about to once again express her worry, but right as she was about to speak, her voice stopped dead in her throat and instead she said, "On board the _USAS Normandy_, comatose." Then her mind supplied, _Now is not the time for such things_.

He turned from her back to his console and pressed a key then spoke

with barely restrained fury. "Prime, get your three nearest fleets into battle ready status. I want the Entire Eden Prime system reduced to rubble by the end of the day. Be sure that the _Normandy_" he paused and the plates on his face shifted in movements showing his worry. "Make sure no one survives." He added a moment later without a quiver in his voice.

A mechanical voiced answered him, "As you Will, Herald."

"Keep me informed on your progress." Seran added before closing the communique then turned to Benezia with the same angry look. "Get us to Virmire as soon as Possible. We have much to do."

Surprised by the vehemence in the command, Benezia opened her mouth to contradict it but as her lips parted to speak her voice stoppedâ€|

She couldn't remember what it was she was going to say. It was here that Benezia realized that most of her memory from the last few minutes was a little fuzzy. She couldn't actually remember any specific thing that had happened in the last few minutes. But she knew how to read an order. She had been officially dismissed so without a word she turned on her heels and walked out of the room as Saren returned to operating his terminal.

As soon as she left the central ward of the ship she contacted the Bridge and told the captain to set a heading for Saren's base in the _Hoc System_. The walk back to the flight deck of _Sovereign_ was uneventful and it wasn't until she made the half way mark before she realized what had just occurred. When she did she stopped dead in her tracks, horrified.

Saren had just given an order to have the entire Eden Prime system, the space station, the off-planet colonies the ships in orbit, as well as the civilians and non-combatants, all to be eradicated. Because one soldier managed to get through to use the Beacon to receive a mental blob of information that he would never be able to interpret, let alone know what to do with. In anger he had just issued an order of extermination of an entire star system, and she had leftâ€| without saying a word. Her face paled as she realized the enormity of what Saren had just ordered done and in an unusual mix of self-loathing and righteous fury she turned on her heels to make her way back to Saren to demand he explain himself. As she began to turn she lost her footing and collapsed to the ground. She caught herself and tried to stand again, but she could not. When she tried to stand she felt an oppressing force press her back to the floor.

She looked about the hall around her and found herself alone. Alone in the long dark hall with no witnesses save for the shadows writhing on the oddly angled walls and across the floorsâ€| shadows she was now beginning to see as slightly disturbingâ€|

Why can't I stand? She thought, she would have said it but she was suddenly short of breath. Several moments later she felt a warm sensation on her cheek and she watched something fall from her face to the floor. With a dull _splash_ she realized it was a tear. Moments later, another tear followed the first, then another. In moments a steady stream of tears flowed from her eyes to the cold plated floor to coalesce into a small puddle on the seamless black metal floor. Silent sobs wracked her body as she struggled to take

shelter against the wall. "How could Saren do this?" she gasped out between sobs.

How could he do thisâ€¦ Whyâ€¦ "Why would you do this Saren?... _Whyâ€¦_" she felt a pain in her chest that was all too familiar as she felt her heart break. She had trusted Saren, she _knew_ Saren. The Saren she knew was not an angry man, was not even a bad man. He was a good man... He was not unstableâ€¦ Saren was _not_ a _Murderer_. Which was exactly what this imminent slaughter was. What could drive him to totally obliterate an entire star system because one man may have possibly received a message that he shouldn't even be able to understand?

She had trusted him. His entire crew had trusted him. And he had betrayed that trust. Somehow he had found a way to fog their minds and allow them to agree, or rather, to just go along with his war. Somehow he had turned them all into willing slaves to his cause. And she, Benezia, had been at the forefront of it all. And she didn't do a thing to stop it.

Terror gripped her heart as she realized what she had been a part of over the past several years as memories of past events came to the forefront of her mind. Saren had lied, cheated, and stolen many advanced technologies and very dangerous secrets and killed hundreds of people merely for weeding out the truth of the story behind the disappearances of said secrets and technology and the good people that had tried to keep it safe. He had lied to the council on _many_ occasions to hide the information that he had about the reapers when he should have informed the council as soon as he had learned of them.

Saren had betrayed themâ€¦ all of them. With each and every decision his betrayal had gotten steadily worse.

Butâ€¦ I agreed with those decisionsâ€¦ the thought whispered in the back of her consciousness before she even knew what it was that she had thought.

Benezia started at the unbelievable thought. Where had that come from? No. Saren was wrong! Anger and frustration bit at her conscience. She could not just let Saren doom the people of that system to death because one little facet of his insane plan didn't fall through. She had to stop this nonsense. She had to do something to save the millions of innocent people in that system. And after several moments of sitting still, quietly against the wall, breathing deeply she had decided she was going to do just that.

That is, until she had a deeply troubling realizationâ€¦

He didn't manipulate her.

Deep downâ€¦ she felt that she **did** agree with those decisions._ If I couldn't believe what Saren had told me about the Reapers then how would the council react?... With nothing less than 'absolute' denial. _Given the fact that Saren had found Sovereign just outside of Geth space the council would insist that this was a plot devised by the Geth to distract the galaxy from they're soon in coming war to wipe out all organics. And if Saren had told the Alliance, they would have had him locked up for trying to get them to spend resources on a non-existent threat that would allow they're enemies within the

Council and the Covenant to attack their flanks freely without fear of re-percussion. And that action would have started a war between the Alliance and the Council.

There was no way around the fact. Saren had acted as he must. The only people in the galaxy that would do anything to stop the Reapers, until Saren found undeniable proof of their existence, would be them.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw movement. But when she turned her head to see what had caused it she saw nothing but the shadows lining the hallway.

Then a thought invaded her confused jumble of thoughts. *It was necessary*

She saw movement again as a warm tingle started up her spine but she decided to ignore it.

It was all necessary. But if he did this to us, how could I ever trust him again. He lied to all of us

But I must her own voice echoed within her mind. Benezia couldn't swear to it but she was certain that the shadows in the hall she sat in moved around her. She ignore them again, they were just a figment of her overactive imagination. No matter how disturbing they continued to seem, Shadows do not move.

I must, what? She asked herself, her pain dissipating into curiosity.

I must Trust Saren

Why should I trust him in this? She asked herself. This is not only madness. It is BUTCHERY!

But before she even knew she was doing it she answered her own question. *Not madness. Necessary...*

The shadows moved again. She was sure of it now. The shadows were definitely moving. In less than a moment she realized that this should be terrifying. But she wasn't scared. She was beyond the ability to feel fear, her mind was worn and her heart was torn. In fact, she felt nothing at all—nothing except a hum, a deep rooted bass gong, resounding within the deepest recesses of her soul. The hum—it built up to an enormous yet silent crescendo that filled her body with a warm pleasant feeling. A feeling of peace and warmth and contentment that she hasn't felt in over one hundred years.

Benezia almost cried with the feelings intensity, and with her mind so muddled by the pain and sorrow of the last several minutes she had no will to fight the sensations running through her thoughts and up and down her body. It took several moments for her to find her voice again. When she did she asked in a voice barely over a whisper, "Why, why is it necessary?"

Because, Saren said it was so

Doubts and frustration flooded into her thoughts at what he ordered

reared in response till they were interrupted again, but this time, it wasn't her voice, it was a swarm of light whispers.

**I trusted Saren on Ma'Naan when I first met the Geth. I trusted him when he ordered the creation of the Rachni army. I trusted him when he told me of the coming of the Reapers. And I trusted him when he told me of the Prothean's weapon against them. I must trust him now. But more than that. I have more than nine centuries of experience on which to lean on to pull me through hard decisions that are necessary of those in command positions. Yet Saren has less than four decades under his belt. He needs my support and comfort. Now so more than ever.**

For just a moment, Benezia doubted the truth of that statement. And as she began thinking on those past events she started doubting those events as well. Something was not right. Her mind clouded over again as the whispers came back and this time they brought the memories with them. Each and every event she had doubted Saren on. First and foremost was the alliance with the Geth; AI were dangerous, evil, and absolutely pitiless of Organics. But Saren had shown her otherwise.

She did not believe a word he told her when he said a race of sentient God-like machines were hell bent on destroying the galaxy and everything in it, but he had again proven himself when after scrap after scrap of evidence he provided as well as the information on board the _Sovereign_ itself, had forced her to recognize the truth.

Each and every time that she was sure that Saren was absolutely wrong; he had merely been showing her how little she actually knew.

Saren hasn't misled yet. Why would he now? After the thought she felt a sense of satisfaction deep within her soul that resonated like the deep hum.

_**Yesâ€¦ I must trust Saren, he will not lead us astray. All will be made clear in time **__._

With a feeling of giddiness like that of a young child that just pleased their mother she smiled to herself and thought._ I will trustâ€¦|_

The shadows collapsed on the empty hall she was sitting in and all thought of deviation from Saren's orders were stripped from her mind and as the warmth and comfort of the shadow encompassed her a new feeling overcame her. _Confidenceâ€¦| _Saren would not lead her astray. She would follow him to the ends of the universe and beyond if he would but ask her to do so.

As she basked in the wonderful touch of the shadow she heard a voice. She thought it was the whispers again but after a moment it repeated itself, but louder.

Benezia?...

The shadows evaporated and she found herself sitting in the hall again. Without the comfortable compression of the shadows she was slightly disoriented. With a slight rise of her head she looked

around her and saw the shadows were where they were supposed to be, on the ceilings and sweeping along the floors. With a shake of her head she cleared her thoughts and a hand placed itself lightly on her shoulder. At the touch Benezia turned with a start and saw one of her acolytes kneeling beside her. A look of concern colored her aquamarine features.

"Benezia? Are you well?"

It took Benezia another moment for her head to fully clear and when it did she smiled lightly to the young Maiden. "Of Course, Ven. Everything is just fine. I just got a little light headed and had to sit down for a few moments."

The young Asari looked unconvinced. "Are you certain Matriarch? You look rather pale"

Benezia shook her head and waved her off as she helped her to stand. "Nonsense, Ven. I am fine." The young Maiden seemed to want to argue with the elder Asari, but she silenced herself. After muttering farewells the two Asari parted ways and Benezia changed direction for her own quarters. The flight crew could handle taking the _Sovereign_ to their destination. The young Maiden was right, Benezia did feel rather drowsy. While she was on her way to meditate in peace she couldn't help the feeling of rightness that came over her. _Everything is working out perfectly._ She thought happily. With Saren at the head of this glorious operation they could not help but to succeed. Everything was as it should be

Yet within a miniscule corner of her mind, well hidden from the rest of her consciousness; a chain of thoughts, memories, and emotions determined to remain free of outside influence shuddered. They could not help but disagree

* * *

><p>John couldn't remember what had happened. All he knew was the entire world was screaming *Screaming* and in _Pain_.

For what reason, John didn't know. The entire world right now was too garbled for him to make anything out. The images that his mind was filled with didn't make any sort or form of sense. First there was a synthetic growth. Pulsing breathing Machine and flesh. Bonded. One and the same. One made from the other. Which one, the image didn't show, only that they were one. Then the images were flooded over with a chaotic farrago of indecipherable colors and emotions. Then came images memories like watching a vid, they were of shadows and indecipherable figures all of them running, Dying, and screaming, from something ... A nightmare except this wasn't a nightmare

The same images over and over cycled again and again within his scuttled mind. First a dozen times. Then twenty, then a hundred Always they came with new sounds and sights, but always with the exact same screams. How many times it repeated John didn't know. He had lost all sense of reality and time in this place. Each new scene brought with it a new setting, and new people running and dying there were trees in this one. At least if trees were dark and dead with purple-black leaves oozing a thick viscous pulp. Then there were rocks, cliffs bleeding thick black ichor-like blood. Then there was

sandâ€| endless sand. Then there was water, an oceans worth, then there was nothing but an endless wasteland filled with the dead.

It was veryâ€| confusing, and taxing, trying to follow along while dealing with the screaming and the writhing and the dying. Each was saturating the universe around him. Filling his mind and soul with a veritable flood of emotions and feelings that were so dark and torn and terrible that there was nothing he could do but be swept into the tempest. He didn't know what was going on with his body, he had lost track of that what felt like an eternity ago. There was just too much to deal with as it was and his mind was simply incapable of keeping track of it all.

For Eonsâ€| or maybe nanosecondsâ€| there was really no way to know how long, because here it all seemed to blend together anyway, he just drowned in the current of thoughts, the Screaming, the Rending and the tearing, the crushing, and the dying, and every other thing he could not begin to describe until it grew into a far to awesome crescendo of clashing colors, sounds, emotions, and terrors. Within them he felt a message. And it wasn't hidden. It was in fact the only thing that all the intruding images, screams, and emotions in his mind could in fact agree on, and they all screamed it. An important message, a message he fully understood. Because this message was not written or bred of spoken wordâ€| it was a feeling; one single terror gripped feeling. And that feeling was simple. Even simpler given he had felt it before. It was a feeling that was shared by all that were hunted, a feeling that all prey knew. It was a simple message that could be given life in three simple words, three words that were enough to fill anything that heard them with dread.

**They are comingâ€|**

* * *

><p>Soooo.

Yah. 2 years. I feel kinda bad about that. I was meaning to continue this after I posted last chapter, but stuff happened, and I got lost in them, then got sidetracked then got too swamped in other things. I cannot apologize enough for the long absence. I am eternally sorry. And I have no really good reason for it other than I just got lost. And for that I beg your forgivenessâ€|

Now lets try to get some important stuff out of the way for future updates. As of now. My focus is on this story. I will not attempt to give you an update speed. But most assuredly, it will be far quicker than 2 years :]

Firstly: When I got back onto my profile a little over a month ago I started reading over this story and I found that I didn't really like how I structured the info in the beginning chapters. I wish I had written them differently, but that cannot be changed now without a very heavy rewrite of those chapters, and that is something I really don't want to do right now. So instead of doing that I will just move on from where I left off and try to continue on the same path I have set for myself.

**Second: when I did get to reading again, I did a major redo of the timeline, most of the things I've set in our legacy are still there, but I have elongated the timeline and I have added a good bit, so in

one of the next several updates I will try to get a timeline of "Our Legacy" out as an intermission or something of the like. That way we can all see what has happened up to this point in My AU. And hopefully it will get me into the mood to revamp the first several chapters and update the info in the remainders. **

There's probably more, but that is all I can think of mentioning at the moment.

Again thanks so much for reading.

**PS: if any of your are interested in Betaing or know any Good betas than please let me know. **

Thanks guys. Peace Out!

End
file.